

Rachel THE *M^{rs}. Donnell*
HISTORY
OF A
YOUNG LADY
OF
DISTINCTION:

In a Series of **LETTERS.**

In **TWO VOLUMES.**

VOL. I.

In nuptials blest each loose desire we shun,
Nor time can end what innocence begun.
GARTH.

THIRD EDITION.

D U B L I N:

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THE HISTORY

OF A

YOUNG LADY

OF

DISTINCTION

IN THE ARTS AND LETTERS

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. I

By the Author of "The History of the Young Lady of Distinction in the Arts and Letters."

THIRD EDITION

DUBLIN

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INTRO-





INTRODUCTION.

MAdamoiselle du Montier, of a family very ancient, but possessed of a very small fortune, was the eldest of twelve children. Brought up under the eye of a wise and virtuous mother, she, thro' her care, imagined, that a young lady of her rank, without a portion, had no choice but that of a convent, and she destined herself to it, as much out of inclination, as necessity; her mother, sensible that she could leave her no other heritage but virtue, spared nothing to inspire her with a solid one, and she had reason to be satisfied with the pains she had taken.

At eighteen years of age, Mademoiselle du Montier was mistress of more wisdom and prudence than are usually acquired by time and a commerce with the world. Unknown to every one, the virtues of this amiable woman, seemed destined to be the admiration of her own family alone; but providence had otherwise ordained it.

Monsieur du Montier resided in a little house, the lands round about which, he caused to be cultivated under his own eye; it was situated about three leagues from Sens, and near a little village, where was but one sorry inn: As he was one day enjoying the fresh air under some trees, he was witness to an accident which happened to the marquis de ———, who had been a brother officer with him in his youth; the
chaise

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chaife of the latter was over-turned, and endeavouring to leap to the ground, he dislocated his foot, and knowing his old comrade, he willingly accepted a bed, which was offered him with a very good grace by Monsieur du Montier. He was obliged to remain with that friend fifteen days, during which time he was so charmed with the virtues of Mademoiselle du Montier, that he determined to repair the injustice fortune had done her, by taking her to wife.

As he was very rich, and had nobody to controul him, nothing was wanting, but to obtain the consent of that lady's father, for her mother was at Rouen, solliciting a law-suit. Monsieur du Montier readily consented to a match so much beyond his hopes; and as the marquis had business in Savoy, which required his presence, he hastened his marriage and his departure.

The young marchioness, deprived of the consolation of embracing her mother, and transplanted (if I may be allowed the expression) into a world she was intirely ignorant of, felt the most lively alarms. She imagined she should find no succour against the perils she was likely to be surrounded with, but in the councils of her mother; who made it both her duty and pleasure to guide her daughter's steps. It was thro' her docility in following the advice of that worthy mistress, that the marchioness became the delight of her husband and all who were of her acquaintance. It were to be wished, that a complete collection of these letters had come to our hands, but thro' an unpardonable negligence several of them were mislaid. However, there appears, thro' the whole of them, such an unaffected piety and solid understanding, that we hope the public will not be displeased with our sending them thus abroad. All we can do is to preserve the connection in the best manner possible, and leave to the intelligent reader's fancy to supply the defect.

THE



THE
HISTORY
OF A
YOUNG LADY,
In a Series of LETTERS.

LETTER I.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to MADAME DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,



HY can I not discover to you my alarms and my fears? You would doubtless shudder, if you knew the terrible situation I am in. Educated and brought up under your eye, amidst the delights of a peaceable and innocent life, I scarce by name knew the world, in the midst of which, the orders of my father, have at once placed me. Obligated at the same time to perform the duties of a christian, a wife, and a woman of the world, every thing terrifies me, puts me to a stand, and leaves me in an irresolution so much the more cruel, as I dare not grant any thing to one of those duties, without failing in performance of the others.

I had flattered myself, that under your eye, I should acquire that rare knowledge which enables you

to reconcile duties so opposite. The situation of our fortune, and my youth, made me consider the time of settling myself, as at a great distance. I was in hopes, that in this establishment, my father would have had more regard to my inclinations, than to the desire, which, most men, naturally have of aggrandizing themselves. Vain hope! A fortune which I had no room to expect determined him. And I was forced to dispose of my hand and my heart, to a man I had scarce seen, and whose character, vices and virtues, I was utterly unacquainted with; to a man, in short, whose high rank sets me in the midst of a world I detest, and whose heart I cannot preserve, but by giving into that taste which attaches him to it. Must I give myself up to a world which the Saviour of it has declared to be his enemy? Must I, while I live in it, be always contradictory to that Saviour? Must I, by separating myself absolutely from it, alienate the heart of a husband who adores me? Surely there are nothing but constraints, rocks and perils! I should however take courage, If I could flatter myself that I should have you for my pilot in so agitated a sea; but I am sensible that I have no room to hope it: Your infirmities, your duty to my father and your family, all convince me, that you cannot give me your advice, so often as I shall stand in need of it. Do not, however, deny it me, my dear mother, but point out to me the path I ought to tread.

If I may trust to appearances, my husband, without being exempt from many defects, has an excellent heart. The pride of his rank, the lustre of his riches, and the seduction of company have obscured a thousand good qualities, without being able to destroy them. Teach me, then, the conduct I ought to observe; to awaken those happy dispositions which are only laid to sleep. I shall wait your answer with an impatience equal to my want of it: Do not defer it I conjure you. Your religion, your tenderness for me, sollicit you to it, as well as the confidence I have in the best of mothers.

I am, &c.
L E T.



LETTER II.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS, her daughter.

Dear Child,

YOUR alarms calm my fears; they comfort me against the real danger of your new situation: What would have become of me, if my dear daughter, dazzled with the glare of an advantageous fortune, had considered only the surface of her condition! a state seducing to a person of her age! I should have mourned her loss, whereas, now, I with reason, thank the Lord. It was he took from you the fatal bandage which blinds the eyes of the children of this world, shew'd you the danger, the emptiness of its transitory honours, its frivolous pleasures, and its deceitful riches. But, my dear child, you must not so far listen to your fears as to be discouraged. The almighty hand which raised you from your state of mediocrity, and placed you in the view of men, will guard you from the rocks which surround that sea whereon you are now beginning to sail. You are at the disposition of providence, what can be more comfortable to you? Remember that queen whose history you read with admiration, the incomparable Esther: Like her, God has destined you to make known his name, and to make him respected in the world. Can you, like her, say to the Lord, You know that I have looked with horror on the pomp which surrounds me? I hope so, my dear child; and since you think my advice necessary, I shall give it you with the greatest pleasure; and shall pray the Almighty to speak to you by my mouth.

I shall not pretend to dissemble with you, but own that it is more difficult to work out one's salvation in the midst of the world, than in the retreat to which

you seemed destined ; but at the same time I would not have you think it is impossible. The Henry's, the Lewis's, and the Edward's, shew us, that there is no condition in which one may not love, fear, and serve the Lord : For this purpose, nothing more is needful than to perform the duties of the state we are in, and there is grace in proportion to the extent of those duties, which God never denies to those who beg it with confidence and humility.

Your first care ought to be to win the heart of your husband, or (if you will have it so) to preserve it : Dazzled by some frivolous charms, that husband, you say, adores you ; if his love for you has no other foundation, " your beauty will soon grow " familiar to his eye, and perchance pall upon his " senses : " But there are other charms, over which time has no power, I mean those of the mind, which it always possesses when it is virtuous. Study the character, the taste, the defects of your husband, that you may conform yourself to his will, in all things, compatible with your duty to God. It will be no pain to you to follow this advice, if you love the marquis, and I hope your inclination will soon agree with your duty ; you were born grateful ; your husband has done every thing for you ; he has sacrificed the great riches and other advantages he might have expected in a match more suitable in point of fortune ; what can be fitter to give rise, in you, to the sentiments of a solid tenderness ?

I have told you that your duty to him ought to be bounded only by your obedience to the Lord : I hope you will have few occasions to call those bounds to mind ; but the means of stopping there, without alienating his affection, are, to shew him daily, and in the smallest matters, that you have no greater satisfaction than in obeying him. Opportunities offer every moment, of sacrificing your inclination, to your husband's, in matters indifferent : That complaisance insensibly acquires to a wife the right of being listen'd to in essential things, because the husband, till that time accustomed to her docility, will conclude

conclude she must have good reasons to make her deviate from her usual behaviour. He will weigh those reasons, and even tho' he should not think them convincing, yet, if he is not the most unreasonable man in the world; he will joyfully seize the opportunity of re-paying complaisance for complaisance.

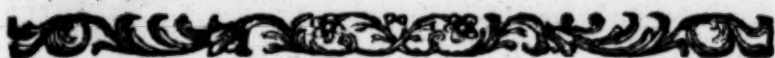
If you shall be under a necessity of thinking, or acting differently to your husband, do not over violently oppose his inclinations; seem, at first, to fall in with his sentiments, then mildly remonstrate to him, that his resolutions are liable to some inconveniencies; and insinuate to him some other means to satisfy him: In short, if possible, put him upon those very means, that he may think he follows his own will, at the same time that he is directed by yours. But if these methods fail, employ prayers, tears and caresses: I dare promise you, my dear daughter, that this conduct will be always attended with success. This is the most essential point, and yet the most neglected by women in general; accustomed to the assiduity and complaisance of a man whilst he is a lover, they persuade themselves that the quality of a husband, will diminish nothing of that attention so flattering to their self-love: They are ignorant, that the instant of marriage, is the commencement of the reign of the other sex, and the end of ours. To preserve a sovereignty which they have often pushed even to despotism, they affect, in the very beginning of their union, to observe no other rule for their actions, but their whims and caprices, of which they would make their husbands the slaves.

A small remainder of love supports a poor husband, but imperceptibly his heart is disgusted; he gives way sometimes in trifles, out of habit, decency, and a love of quiet; but soon disgusted at a commerce so much to his loss, he seizes the first occasion of importance to shew he is master, and that he means to enjoy his prerogatives. My dear child will never reduce the marquis to extremities; her ambition, satisfied with the title of companion, will never attempt to usurp that of mistress, contrary to

the order of providence, which has destined her to obey. But I forget that this letter exceeds the common bounds; I think I am talking with my dear daughter; that pleasing error prevents my being so concise, as (perhaps) your occupations require; when they spare you some moments, employ them in writing to me, and be assured, you possess the heart of tenderest of mothers.



LET-



L E T T E R I I I .

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

YOUR letter has restored to me my tranquility. I thought, whilst I was reading it, that God assured me, thro' your mouth, he would not suffer me to be tempted beyond my strength. Multiply to me, my dear mother, such succours, and do not fear making your letters too long; my beloved employment shall be to read them, and my greatest care to profit by them.

We are now at one of the marquis's country seats; he would not have me appear at Chambéry in a negligent condition, and all hands are at work in providing me an equipage fit for his quality. I take the advantage of this solitude, to study his character; every moment confirms what I before told you. The marquis has no faults where the heart is concerned; being tender and compassionate, the indigent never apply to him without finding the effects of his liberality; being honest and sincere, he abhors even the appearance of a lye; without being prodigal, I find from his discourse, he lives up to his income; and that his house and table are always open to men of merit. But he owns that (spight of all these good qualities) he is not beloved, and that decency alone obliges his neighbours to keep up any kind of commerce with him. He has, for some years, been at variance even with his own family; and none of his relations, not excepting his mother, visit him above once a year.

Although he informed me of these things, I did not dare to shew my curiosity, and contented myself with expressing the great satisfaction I should have

in

in seeing him reconciled to his mother (who he says deserves greatly to be respected) but whose character is incompatible with his. I am hasty, says he, and my mother is passionate, and we are never upon better terms than when we are asunder. I needed not that confession to know the cause why they do not see each other. The marquis's temper throws him every moment into excesses of anger, in which he spares nothing; without having been the object of it, I have, already, several times, been witness to it. I contented myself, at first, with avoiding his presence, when he was in that situation, and he appeared to me to be pleased with my behaviour.

Since my last letter, I determined to make some efforts to cure him; and tho' at his years, they attempt seems difficult, I do not now despair of it. I observed that his rage was more or less violent, in proportion to the opposition he met with in those moments. It is a torrent, said I to myself, which ravages only because it meets with obstacles; we must give it free course. I had soon an opportunity to begin my operations; amongst the maid servants he hired for me, I immediately distinguished one who seemed to deserve a better condition; the marquis, who, perceived my liking to this woman, called her nothing but my favourite; he had, in my presence, given her some commissions, which she had executed punctually; however, the next day he insisted that she had not fulfilled his directions: He told her of it with moderation; but the woman, endeavouring to shew him that he was in the wrong, he fell into a kind of fury. A footman, of whom I enquired the cause, having informed me, I came into the marquis's chamber; I trembled from head to foot, but when I had viewed the marquis, I was ready to sink outright. Is it possible, my dear mother, that passion should so greatly disfigure us? His eyes seemed almost to shoot fire, and his voice was so affected, that he could scarce utter two articulate words; he stagger'd and bit the head of his cane with rage. I pray'd the Lord to fortify me; and without deigning to listen
to

to the woman, I told her angrily, that she should quit my presence and the house immediately, since she had been bold enough to contradict her master. I afterwards exaggerated to the marquis this woman's fault; I even exhorted him not to suffer such people to oppose him; as I raised my voice, my husband became by degrees more pacified; he recovered strength enough to tell me what had occasioned his passion, and having asked if I was not witness to the orders he had given my woman, I (embracing him) answered, she must certainly be in the wrong: And as I insisted in requesting she might be turned away, he then began to plead for her; we dined with great tranquillity; and as the marquis, when he returned to his good humour, remembered that I had eluded his question with regard to the dispute; he desired me to tell him plainly what I thought of it. I suffered myself to be much intreated, and it was not till after repeated instances, that I shewed him he was in the wrong. I recall'd to his mind the subjects for which he has been in a passion since we came to Savoy, and he agreed they had been always trifles.

It is impossible to express to you the confusion which was then painted on my husband's countenance, and his grief for having unjustly ill-treated that poor woman; he desired her to forget what was past, and was very melancholy the rest of the day. At night he called me into his closet, and told me he had made serious reflections on all the faults his hasty temper had made him commit; that he was thoroughly sensible of how great import it was to him to correct that defect, but that he was terrified at the efforts necessary to be made to destroy a habit which he had suffered to take such deep root; that he hoped, however, to succeed in it, if I would assist him in that undertaking. I encouraged him greatly to execute so laudable a resolution; and since that time, he having been twice in a passion, I fixed my eyes steadfastly upon him, which he no sooner perceived, than quitting me hastily he went down
into

into the garden: An old valet de chambre, who has lived with my husband these fifteen years, and who knew his temper perfectly, was by chance in my apartment, the first time I had an opportunity to shew his master by a look, that he was in danger of breaking his good resolution; he observed our behaviour, and as he knew the marquis was terrible only at the first emotion, he concluded he had quitted our presence only to get time to resume his calmness. I did not pass the same judgment on it, and was afraid I had displeased my husband: Being uncertain what he would think of my look, I was become speechless and trembling; that faithful servant perceived my fears, and, moved only by his affection, threw himself at my feet, weeping with joy: Be comforted, madam, said he, I dare answer for it that my master not only will be pleased with your behaviour, but I dare prophecy that you will cure him; if he would once cease giving himself up to passion, he would be a perfect man, and we should owe to you the happiness of the best lord in the world; for he has told me twenty times, that this cursed passion poisoned all his felicity. At this discourse I recovered myself a little, and mixing my tears with the tears of this man, whom I could not help respecting, as his affection to his master raises him above the rank of those of his condition, I with great tranquillity waited for the marquis's return: He came back in a quarter of an hour, with a serene countenance, and having embraced me, returned thanks for his victory. He has always acted in the same manner ever since that time, nothing equals his joy, and I have the most sanguine hopes for the time to come.

But have I not reason to fear, dear mother, that whilst my husband is labouring to cure his defects, I may myself contract some, which I have hitherto been preserved from by your wise councils? I am terrified at the sums expended in my dress; I fear lest God should demand of me an account of monies which might relieve so many poor wretches; how can I tell, but my heart may attach itself to these worldly

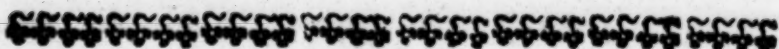
worldly pomps, which I renounced at my baptism. Dictate to me the conduct I ought to observe on this occasion. The fear of displeasing the marquis, who earnestly desires to see me gaily dressed, has prevented me from discovering to him my sentiments on this head; but can I in conscience continue to keep silence? Comfort me, dear mother, and direct my steps in this affair.

The Chevalier d'Arcis, who delivered me your letter, assured me that you were in perfect health, as well as my father and all the family this helps to make your absence a little supportable. I have no other cause of uneasiness.

The marquis, who begins to be dear to me, leaves me nothing to wish for. I assure you that the motives of gratitude which you urge in your letter, are unnecessary, for the giving birth to a love I so intimately owe him, and could never have thought my heart capable of receiving such lively sentiments as it feels at this instant. Towards you, they cannot possibly be augmented, since they have always equalled your goodness.

I am, &c.

L E T-



LETTER IV.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Persevere my dear child ; continue as you have begun ; soon, by your conduct, our dear marquis will be metamorphosed to a new man. You have found the means to tame his passions, and, you will soon, intirely subdue them ; there is nothing which does not yield to mildness, and it is, with reason, the eternal wisdom hath told us, that the pacific shall inherit the earth : An empire so much the more pleasing, as it is held by the consent of all men. Conquerors make slaves, who obey them only from constraint, and who shake off the yoke so soon as they can do it without punishment. Mildness secures to us a more solid dominion, since it brings under our subjection, by choice, those who live with us.

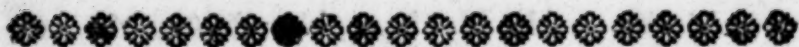
I approve of your complaisance to your husband, with regard to dress ; you have not yet acquired the right of obtaining the preference to your inclinations. The day will come, and I hope it will come soon, when your husband, undeceived by your care, in relation to the maxims of the age, will readily yield to your just desires. In the mean time, you should endeavour to observe the following rules : Never dress yourself in an undecent manner, or so as the strictest modesty may be offended thereby. Secondly, let your sole intention in dress be to please your husband. By observing these two rules, you may rest satisfied.

I am sometimes diverted by representing to myself the fatigue the toilet will occasion to you ; to be three hours before a looking-glass, under the hands
of

A YOUNG LADY. 25

of a chamber-maid! My dear girl, will find the task too great for her. It is, however, the common and favourite occupation of the ladies of this age; if you would make it appear less painful, cause some useful book to be read to you during that operation, and you will make the most of time, always precious at your age, from the necessity we are under of getting instruction. Adieu, my dear child, I embrace thee, as well as the marquis, a thousand times; if he goes on thus, I fear he will dispute with thee the first place in my heart.





LETTER V.

The MARCHIONESS DE——, to Madame DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

AT last I breathe: Being alone in my closet, I am recovering myself from the horrid fatigues I have suffered this fortnight. Is this then the world, the object of the wishes and desires of so many of us? To change the order of nature, to go to bed when the sun rises, and rise when he sets; to pass six hours at the table, to satisfy those wants for which half an hour would suffice; to fix one's self to a grass-plat, and disorder in one night the affairs of a whole year; to undergo successively fears and hopes, joy and despair; to suffer a conversation three hours long, in which they make use only of a jargon void of all sense? These, my dear mother, are the disagreeable occupations with which I have been continually taken up since your last letter.

I was fearful of wanting moderation in the use of what they call pleasures; and now I am apprehensive I shall stand in need of patience. Are these proper amusements for thinking beings? And must I pass the greatest part of my life without making use of my reason? For surely, to submit to such customs, is to renounce it.

How many times have I called to mind those happy moments, in which, my father, surrounded by his numerous family, told us of the wonders of nature; made us observe, amidst the great events which history sets before our eyes, the causes of the rise and fall of the greatest empires; permitted us to consider him as a friend, to ask him questions, to mix our reflections with his. There, the hours seemed to be minutes, but here, the very reverse: I must, however,

however, endeavour to accustom myself to this kind of life, since the taste of my husband ought to regulate mine.

The first hours which I passed in the house of madame the countess of Menthon, where we alighted on our arrival at Chambery, I was incapable of observing any thing. The eyes of a numerous company, which were assembled to receive me, were fixed upon me; I was sensible, and with great confusion, that I wanted that free and easy air, which I observed in all those ladies. But the marquis has surprized me in this part of my letter; he doubts, he says, the dexterity of my pencil in painting to you a scene in which, I fear, I acted a painful and ridiculous character; he has taken the pen from me, and will go on with my narration.

The MARQUIS, in continuation.

NO, madam, I do not doubt the capacity of our dear girl, but I fear her modesty: It would never suffer her to tell you how many rivals she gave me in that first visit, in which she behaved, so, as to deserve the admiration of the whole company. She was as beautiful as an angel, and, I swear, she obscured the most brilliant dress I could contrive: Her modest air did not appear embarrassed; however, she trembled, and as we got out of the coach, she squeezed my hand so as almost to crush it, and intreated me not to leave her a moment, and to inform her by my looks, if she should do any thing contrary to their customs.

The eyes of the whole company were fixed upon her, as she has told you; but she did not add, that they appeared pleased with her: And that she must have seen by my looks, which she consulted every moment, that I was satisfied with the impression she had made at first sight.

Madame de Menthon, and her amiable daughter, having made my dear girl sit between them, and all the company being placed, your charming daughter

completed the conquest of all their hearts, by the wise and prudent manner with which she demeaned herself; that heaviness and confusion, she expresses to have been in, must have been very imperceptible, since nobody, not even I, observed it. I had not breath to return the compliments that were made me on all sides. And to the intent you may know the true value of them, I shall give you, in few words, the character of our Savoyard ladies. They are ignorant of using a language foreign to their thoughts, and their mouths are always the faithful interpreters of their hearts.

The ladies readily own the beauty of those who are superior to them, and do not take pains to hunt out imaginary defects, with a view to obscure their real beauties; you will judge, from hence, how well pleas'd I was with their approbations of my choice: My wife continues to deserve them more and more.

I had no need to read your letter, to be assured, that I owe to her complaisance alone, the equality of mind she has shewn, amidst a whirl of occupations, quite foreign to her taste. I am infinitely obliged to her for it, and will calm her fears for the future. Her arrival occasioned the tumultuous entertainments which have so greatly fatigued her: More reasonable diversions will succeed them. I confess, I think we are obliged, in some measure, to conform to the taste of the generality of mankind; but, I expect that sacrifice, from her own reason and your good councils, nothing can exceed the wisdom of the advice, you have given her, in your former letter, and, I can assure you, the perusal of them would have increased my respectful regard to you, if that sentiment had not been at its utmost period, the instant I became the husband of your charming daughter. But I leave her to finish her letter.

And here, my dear mother, I resume the pen again, and pray now confess, have not I strong temptation to be vain? But I know on what my husband's excessive praises are founded; his love for me is a micro-

A YOUNG LADY. 29

microscope, thro' which he views all my good qualities. Wonder not then, if he exaggerates them. I will use my utmost efforts to become, really, such as I appear to him to be, and, as he tells you, your councils alone can furnish me with that kind of knowledge of the world which is compatible with my duty and good sense.

I am marvellously taken with the secret you have taught me to beguile the tediousness of the toilet, whilst I am dressing. I make one of my women read to me the Roman History: The marquis will be one of the hearers, and we frequently occasion her to stop, that we may make our reflections on it; happy would be the time, if you could add your reflections! Will it never come?

I had forgot to tell you, that the marquis has very seriously desired me to get instructed in the art of playing at cards: And since I launched into the world, I have seen the necessity of it, for playing takes up the greatest part of the time set apart for society. But, spight of that necessity, I shall never have a taste for so frivolous and amusement, and my duty to the marquis, will, alone, induce me to take a few lessons.

I am, &c.



L E T T E R VI.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Daughter,

I Can easily conceive the fatigue you must have undergone, in the new kind of life you have been, for some time, subject to; and whatever the marquis may say, you must have been embarrassed, at your first visit; and I am charmed, that you acquitted yourself in it, so much to your advantage. You ask me (at the same time that you are reflecting upon what you have undergone for this fortnight past) is this the world which is the object of the desires and wishes of so many persons? Not altogether, my dear child, you have yet seen (if I may be allowed the expression) only the bark of the world; such, as it appears to be, it may be the object of the wishes of a young lady who imagines nothing can exceed the pleasures of a noisy and tumultuous life: It may be, likewise, the idol of those whom we suppose to have souls, without our being convinced by any exterior signs, that they have any: But it will never give any thing but disgust, I shall not say, only to those who are thoroughly affected with the spirit of christianity, but even to those who have the least good sense. But we must not, from thence, conclude, to place in the class of puerile minds, all those who give into what is frivolous. No, daughter, it is often wisdom to bring yourself to the level of senseless people. They compose the multitude, and we must make an allowance for their foibles. Happy are we, if we have nothing to bear with, in this world, but the contempt it inspires. I shall not attempt to unveil to you, that criminal world, which you will know
but

A YOUNG LADY. 31

but too soon, and against which, you must use your whole indignation.

The picture, which the marquis has sent me of the Savoyard ladies, enchants me, and amongst people, of so agreeable a character, you must certainly find many, who from reason, give into the most frivolous customs; and you should use your utmost efforts, to contract a more intimate acquaintance with them. But that should not diminish the regard you ought to have for the taste, folly and fancy of others, when you can give way to them without a crime, and they may be only a little troublesome to you. In a circle of ladies, where the analysis of a new cap is to be made, I would agree to it, and talk as seriously of it as others; I would listen, in a complaisant manner, to the tiresome account of the domestick affairs of one, to a description of the witty, genteel behaviour of the children of another; and to an account of the illness of a third, in such a manner that every one, in ending her tale, should be persuaded I was amused with it.

The greatest part of these poor women, are incapable of keeping up any other conversation, and would it not be cruel to prevent them from talking of those things which are only suitable to their capacity? I insist, strongly, dear child, upon the necessity of giving into the foibles of others, because, in my opinion, nothing is more burthensome to society, or, more ridiculous, than a woman, (especially a young woman) who would bring every one to her own standard. I would rather undergo the disagreeable task of bearing a long, frivolous, and unintelligible conversation in which people make use, as you observe, of a jargon, void of sense, than be with one of those witty ladies, who are wholly taken up with shewing you, and every one else about them, how much they think themselves superior to you. Adieu, dear child, it is time to answer the marquis.

S I R,

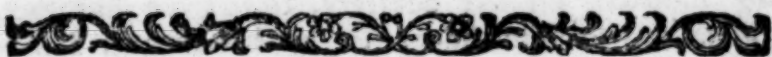
SIR,

I AM not surprized, that our dear child is come off successfully in her first adventure. It is true, the first entrance upon the world, is a little embarrassing to a young lady, brought up in solitude; but they, who are so happy as to have such masters as you, make the greatest progress. That easy politeness, which, at first sight, distinguishes a man of birth and education, must necessarily be acquired, by living with a gentleman, who knows, and practises it in the most eminent degree. I hope my daughter will improve daily by following your steps, and though, your example is sufficient to make her what she ought to be, yet I shall not refuse giving her my advice, as you seem desirous of.

I am, &c.



LET-



LETTER VII.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother. (a)

Dear Mother,

I Had never so much need to call to mind the submission I owe to the orders of heaven; it requires of me the greatest sacrifice. Your last letter had determined the marquis to grant me the satisfaction I had so long sigh'd for: With what ardour did I not labour about the preparations for a journey, which would bring me to the arms of the best of mothers! My husband seemed to share my impatience: Could we foresee the invincible obstacle, which providence has opposed to our designs?

The count de C——, one of the principal lords that the king of Sardinia chose to accompany his new comfort, had always a remarkable regard for me: As he has been for a long time my husband's friend, I attributed his assiduity to his friendship for the marquis; that dear husband had desired me to treat the count with a distinguished behaviour, and, as I knew he was a man of great merit, I obeyed, without repugnance, and without the least suspicion, of the trouble I was preparing for myself: But, why should I keep you longer in suspense? That count, whom I thought to be a man of the greatest honour and probity, is a most perfidious wretch; he has abused the confidence of his friend, and dares hope to associate me in his perfidy; he has taken from me even the means of flying from him, and delivering myself, for ever, from his odious presence. But what renders my condition more terrible, is, that, in appearance, he has given me no room to complain of him, and,
my

(a) Between the last letter of the Marchioness to Madame du Montier, and the following, is a chasm of a year.

my husband, on the contrary, thinks he has great obligations to him since, 'tis by his means, I have been nominated a lady of the Bed-chamber to the princess of Lorraine, now our queen, whom I am to follow to Turin.

On this occasion, my dear mother, I have great need of your councils. I will tell you the particulars of the event which informed me of the count's passion, and will strictly follow the advice you give me. Towards the close of the carnival, a great ball was given at the town-house. My husband made a party with the count, and a lady he has a long time been particularly acquainted with. About a quarter of an hour before we went, this lady, who is about my size, for some whim, unknown to me, insisted upon changing dress with me. I could not deny her that satisfaction, and the moment before we got into the coach, we made the exchange, unperceived by any one.

The great number of strangers, which the journey of the queen had brought to Chambery, rendered the ball very confused: I soon lost my company, and fatigued with seeking them fruitlessly, I sat down, near a masque, whom I could not know to be the count, since *He*, also, had changed his dress. I do not know whether he really took me for his mistress, or only feigned to do so, that he might have an opportunity of discovering to me his sentiments: However it was, having approached my ear, he said to me, Cease, madam, to accuse me of ingratitude to you; I know what value I ought to set on you, and would give any thing in the world I could be faithful to you: But the same fatality which forces you to love me, spight of my inconstancy, attaches *me* to the marchioness. I know her virtue, and can entertain no other hope, but that of adoring her in secret; she will never know the sentiments she hath inspired me with, but I am sensible, that it will not be in my power to break my chains, how heavy soever they may be; pity me then, madam, and suffer me to be your friend, since I can no longer be your lover.

I was

I was so struck with the count's discourse, that it was a long time before I could recover strength to answer him. I did not know whether I ought to fly from him, or take advantage of his error, to shew him the meanness of a passion, which made him violate the most sacred duties.

Whilst I was thus doubting what to do, my husband, and the count's mistress, came up to us unmasked; the marquis was very merry about the mistakes our metamorphosis had occasioned: He obliged me to take off my masque, and to go into a room, where he had provided refreshments for us, and I followed him, scarce knowing what I did: The count seemed to be confounded; and if my husband had been less busy in driving away the crowd, he must have perceived, that something extraordinary had happened to us. Luckily for me, the confusion so greatly increased, that the count's mistress proposed going away. I longed to be alone, that I might consider how I ought to behave: But I could not possibly come to any resolution. I found the danger equal in concealing from, or making known, to the marquis, the sentiments of his friend: Your letter put an end to my trouble.

My husband promised me, that immediately after the queen's departure, he would procure me the happiness of seeing you again: It was no difficult matter for me to avoid, till that time, being alone with the count, and I was in hopes, to take jointly with you, measures the most proper for so unlucky an accident. That thought gave me a little quiet, and I was intirely easy the next day, when the marquis told me that the count, having been appointed lord steward of the queen's household, was gone post to Turin, whither the king had commanded him.

But I had not reason to be long pleased; six days after, my husband gave me a letter, in which the count informed him, that his majesty had done me the honour to appoint me one of the ladies of the bed-chamber to the queen; my husband applauded the friendship of the count, who had procured for me

me this advantageous post; why could he not see into his motives? He would have shared my hatred for him. This news quite over-whelmed me; my husband attributed it to my little relish for the world, and putting me in mind of my duty to my son, he conjured me to get the better of my repugnance, and not lose the opportunity of advancing my family, which may become numerous; for I think I am three months gone with my second child.

What violence did I not commit on my inclinations, and what punishment did I not suffer, to conceal from him the treachery of his friend? Till that time, I had endeavoured to justify him in my mind, by imagining that I owed, only to chance, the knowledge of his sentiments; I flattered myself that he would take the advantage of absence, to destroy a passion, which was not supported by the least hope, as he himself had acknowledged: But his conduct undeceived me: He has less endeavoured to bestow an obligation, than to find new opportunities of committing an outrage on his friend.

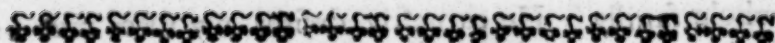
I sometimes suspect he had engaged his mistress to change dresses with me, to enable him to open to me his sentiments, without giving me room to complain of it; for was it natural to take the opportunity of a ball to speak to her of such an affair? But, then, what should be the reason of the confusion he shewed when he found his error? Indeed, my dear mother, I am quite confounded; inform me, and guide my steps. You will be pleased to give me a particular answer to this, and add another, which I may shew the marquis, unless you think fit to acquaint him with his friend's disposition; and, indeed, the latter would please me much the best; since, according to all probability, it would put an end to my journey to Turin, and to all commerce with the count.

If I could receive any comfort in the cruel situation I now am, it would be from the sentiments of my husband on your account. His veneration for you, his friendship for my father, and his tenderness for me, inspire him with paternal sentiments for our whole

whole family. He earnestly desires my sister may be sent to him, and he will undertake to settle her well in the world ; I know the poor child will sustain a great loss, by being taken from you : But, my dear mother, she will be a great comfort to me. The necessity of repeating to her your wise instructions will make me call them to mind, in case I should be so unhappy as to forget them.

I shall expect your answer ; and as it will be impossible for my sister to be here before our departure, if you grant me the favour I have asked of you, I will send my woman, of whom I have so often spoken, and to whose care I can trust her. Adieu, dear mother, what shall I not suffer till I receive your answer ?





L E T T E R V I I I.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

I Share with you the trouble, occasioned by the painful situation of your affairs, at this instant; but I am quite easy, with respect to the consequences of that adventure. Ever since your marriage, you have been in the hands of providence, which disposes all things for your good; give yourself up wholly to its divine dispensation, without endeavouring to change and fit them to your low and narrow views: It can bring you to the goal, by means, which, may seem to you, to carry you from it.

You would have committed a great fault in informing your husband of the dispositions of the count; there is scarce any occasion in which such a conduct would be right. I know the marquis would have no apparent cause to complain of his friend, but it would sow the seeds of division between them, which might produce, in time, the most terrible consequences.

True modesty hates extremities, and there are other means to contain the count within proper bounds. I am convinced that the change of the dresses was his contrivance. He foresaw the difficulty of inspiring you with a passion for him, and the manner of his conduct, shews me, the greatness of the danger to which you are exposed: That man knows the human heart, and yours in particular, the contrivance he used to make known his sentiments to you, shew less the esteem he has for your virtue, than his hopes of subduing it: Be not under the least apprehensions of his repeating the declaration of his passion; he knows that would frustrate his designs. It is sufficient for him that you know of his love, and that

that you may attribute all his actions to that motive. He will not do a single one to disgust you, and it will not be his fault, if you do not believe, that his respect for you, has extinguished every other sentiment in his heart, which will be of great import to him to gain your esteem, your confidence, and by degrees your love.

I must confess to you, my dear child, he could not go a readier way to work. You immediately conceived the greatest indignation against him, and you will maintain that sentiment, so long as you shall think him culpable: The least relapse will strengthen it; but if he can convince you that he is a victim to his respect for you, if he proves to you the violence of his passion by the constraint he puts upon himself to conceal it: You will cease to hate him, and indignation will give place to pity: In that dangerous situation, he will speak of the favours he has done you; his employment will furnish him every moment, with opportunities of doing you fresh services; and what power has not gratitude over a heart like yours? Such, my dear marchioness, are the views of the count: But, it is easy to avoid the danger, when we are acquainted with the enemy's plan of operations.

I do not mention the continual recourse you ought to have to God: It is *He* alone, can guide you in such a situation: But I am about to dictate to you, in few words, the exterior conduct you ought to observe, with regard to the count. Carefully avoid taking more notice of him than of any other person, but avoid *more* carefully any extraordinary precautions. He knows your virtue, and will take those precautions to be the effect of your mistrust of your own strength, on his account. Let your tranquillity persuade him of your indifference, and, of the slight account you have made of his declaration, and of the little danger you think there is in seeing him. Continue to convince him, not by words, but by your actions, of your attachment to your duty, and of the solidity of your virtue. In a word, whilst *inwardly*, you are taking all proper precautions to do nothing

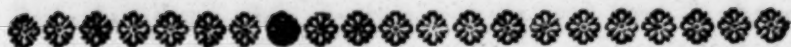
which may feed his flame, behave to him *openly*, in such a manner, as to convince him, that you have considered his declaration of love, as a piece of merriment, which has made so little impression on you, that you do not remember it. Be assured, my daughter, that such a behaviour will disconcert, and probably cure him, from his displeasure, and little hopes of succeeding.

You are now, I find, about to appear in the grand theatre of the court: To inhabit that country, where, deceit, treason, ambition, envy, and jealousy, reign; shall I wish you joy of it, my dear daughter? *Yes*, that country is dangerous, only, to those, who enter it with their eyes blinded: Thank heaven yours are open: You have coolness enough to judge wisely of the representation, and, I doubt not, but, you will depart full of contempt for what they call pleasures, grandeurs, and dignities. You will see the world in its greatest lustre, in its triumph, and yet you will find it low and unworthy to occupy, or even to amuse a reasonable mind. I have a great pleasure, in representing to myself, the surprize you will be under at the strange scenes which will pass before your eyes: An account of which I desire you will send me.

Your father has conceived the greatest pleasure in hearing of your elevation to so brilliant a post, as that you have arrived at: He has wrote to the marquis, and wishing him joy of your preferment, thanks him for his good will to your sister, the care of whose establishment, he intirely gives up to him. I charge you with the care of her conduct. She has more sense than girls have, commonly, at fourteen years of age: And, I hope, that by the help of your instructions, I shall have no reason to be dissatisfied with her. She will be a witness of your actions, which will induce you so to demean yourself, as, that you may have no need to blush either before God or man.

I leave to your prudence, the time and manner of her departure. I give you a thousand embraces,
And am, &c.

L E T-



LETTER IX.

The MARCHIONESS DE——, to Madame DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I Intended to have wrote to you before my departure from Chambery; but since the arrival of the queen, I have not had an hour to myself. That princess has been extremely good to me; and would not suffer me to leave her a moment. The princess of Lorraine is tall and well shaped; and tho' she is not a beauty, is extremely amiable. An air of goodness spreads itself over her whole person, and gains the hearts of all those who approach her. She seems to forget her rank with those she honours with her confidence: And I am already so free from constraint before her, that it much diminishes the trouble, occasioned by my elevation to a post which produces a thousand jealousies against me. That good princess, has her heart at her tongue's end: She appears displeased with the grave airs of the ladies appointed to attend her, and likes much better, my free and natural behaviour; and has condescended to trust me with some little secrets, which shew that she has confidence in me; of which I will endeavour to make such use as shall not deserve reproach.

We departed last Thursday, in pretty good weather for the season. We lay at a village called Aiguebelle; it rained a little in the evening, and, the people of the country assured us, it snowed upon the mountains. To arrive at St. Michael's, we went thro' roads, that, I thought horrible: But which, they assured me were very fine, in comparison of those which were to come. I was much surprized, to see, that the greatest part of the people of the country, had a swelling in the throat, which they call *Goitre*.

Some of them have that swelling as large as a child's head: They say, this infirmity is caused by the bad waters they drink; they do not seem to be incommoded by it, and, my husband assured me, it is a pleasure to them.

From St. Jean de Morrienne to St. Michael's, you see nothing but mountains cover'd with snow, and are obliged, in order to preserve the sight, to wear glasses over your eyes. In the evening, the queen said to me, pressing my hand, alas, my dear, these are miserable people! 'Tis a nasty country! But it was still worse the third day of our journey. We were in narrow roads, bordered with precipices and cypress trees: The cold was so extreme, that, in spite of our balls filled with hot water, which was changed at every village, we were like to die with cold. We were forced to ascend a mountain, which in its form resembled a sugar loaf, and which was surrounded with precipices. The queen trembled from head to foot, and I confess, my own condition was not much better. One false step of our horses, or, rather our mules, would have sent us to the other world. To add to our horror, we had a river, whose waters make a frightful noise, and seem black as ink, occasioned, as the marquis told me, from the powdered slates drawn into them. In the midst of these horrors, we could not but admire a natural cascade, more than two hundred feet high; with the waters of which we were much wetted, being obliged to pass very near it: The liquid partly froze as it fell, which produced a thousand figures, and they being enlightened by the rays of the sun, appeared to be painted with the most beautiful colours.

We arrived at Lunebourg, a town situate at the foot of Mount Cenis, pierced thro' with cold; I cannot express to you the compassion I felt at the sight of those poor wretches; buried in a gown of linsey woolsey; they hardly looked like rational creatures. The queen ordered some of them to approach her. She interrogated them with great affability; and as she was examining their gowns, tyed with a thick
girdle

girdle above the breast, 'tis our winter dress, said one of the women; but how do you support the cold, said the queen? Saving your presence, replied the woman, we live in our stables with our cattle. The queen, touched with their condition, caused money to be distributed to them, and I emptied my pockets, and those of the marquis, who was highly diverted to see me run from house to house, distributing my little charities. Alas, my dear mother, what poverty! what misery! I shall never forget that spectacle! and the profusions of our houses, will, henceforth, be very painful to me; one may truly say, that, these miserable wretches, would be comfortably fed with the crumbs which fall from our tables. The little children, laid upon the dung, with the sheep, could scarce be distinguished from them; in a moment I had given away almost every thing, I pulled off my under petticoats, and my chamber-maids did the like, to wrap up several of those poor creatures, whose rags hardly covered their nakedness. Some of the queen's train having observed me, told her majesty of it; and she, out of her goodness, bid me promise, from her, a gown for every child in the parish, which excited a thousand cries of joy, and drew on her as many benedictions.

What pleasure, is it not, my dear mother, at so little expence, to ease the misery of our fellow-creatures? If the rich could conceive what I felt in that moment, their *self-love* would engage them to suppress all their idle expences. What do I say? They would deprive themselves even of necessaries, to enjoy the pleasure which would be occasioned by the transport and gratitude of the poor they should assist.

The next day, Sunday, was our important day, we were to pass Mount Cenis, the name of which I cannot mention without shuddering. Imagine to yourself, a mountain whose summit you cannot see, and which appears, in some places, almost perpendicular. It is covered so deep with snow, that travellers often find their graves therein. A very narrow road leads to the top of the mountain: Crosses, placed from
space

space to space, mark out the dangerous ways, which you cannot depart from, ever so little, without running the risk of falling into precipices covered with snow. Here, crosses also shew, where unfortunate travellers have been found, frozen to death; and our guides, for our comfort, took care to give us the history of them.

We were carried in a sort of chairs, which could go only one a breast, therefore we could not have the assistance of conversation to alleviate our fears. The marquis preceded *me*, and I was followed by the count, whom we had met at Lunebourg, and who had spared no pains to provide me all the conveniencies necessary for so tiresome a passage. It appeared to me very long, as did also the plain. We warmed ourselves in an hospital, which is in the midst of it, and where they are obliged to entertain travellers, when they are over-taken by tempests: For when a certain wind blows, it brings at once, such a quantity of snow from the mountains, that they are in danger of being buried under it. We warmed ourselves again, for a moment, at an inn, called the Great Cross, which is at the further end of the plain. I now thought my troubles were near at end, but the most difficult remained to be got over.

I cannot find words to express the horror I felt, at descending the mountain. The heat of the sun was so amazingly great, that my women, having no masques, had their faces flayed with it. The sun melts the snow during the whole day, and as it freezes in the night, you walk, as it were, on a looking-glass, in a path, which, oftentimes, is not four feet wide. To your right, you have hanging over your head, rocks, which I should be inclin'd to believe are older than the world, and which seem ready to crush you every moment. To your left, are precipices, which you cannot look on, without shuddering. The torrents which precipitate themselves from the top of the rock into the abysses below, make so terrible a noise, that you cannot hear yourself speak.

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The attempts of my chairmen to encourage me, were useless, I thought my last hour was come, and heartily recommended myself to God. These men run upon the ice, with a boldness, which augmented my fears; they fall very often, but, so soon as it happens, he, who is foremost, suddenly sets down the chair, so that seldom any mischief ensues.

Would you believe, my dear mother, that in the midst of these rocks, these torrents, these precipices, there should be a village inhabited by human creatures? We stopped a moment in a place which is called Ferriere. The queen said to me, with great emotion, if this is to last much longer, I shall certainly die before we get to the end of our journey.

At last we got out of this terrible road; and arriving at the foot of the mountain, to a place called the Novalaise, we found the finest country in the world. Here was a *spring*, which made us forget the frightful *winter*, we had just left. Nothing remarkable happened, 'till we met the king; the queen would have fallen on her knees, and kiss'd his hand, but was prevented by the king, who kindly rais'd and embraced her: Refreshments were immediately served up, and the queen told the king, that the first favour she begged of him was, an assurance that she should never again travel the road she had just now passed; the king promised her, and smiled. This prince, tho' not handsome, has nothing disagreeable in his countenance. His conversation is amusing, and he can, at proper times, lay aside his grandeur.

At last we arrived at Turin, and notwithstanding my fatigue, I could not help admiring that city; to which you enter thro' an avenue six Italian miles long, bordered with high trees, and terminated at one end by the city, and at the other by the castle, which served as a prison for the king's father.

I will not trouble you with a word touching the ceremony of the marriage, or the festivals that followed: But cannot forbear telling you, that, quite dazzled with the magnificence, which appeared on that occasion, and which, I suppose had that effect
on

on *me*, only because I have not been accustomed to it, but which would very little affect *you*.

I obey my father's orders, you see, very exactly, who required a circumstantial account of my journey: I shall also obey yours, in what you require in your last letter. I expect my sister with great impatience. Good God! how much I pity her for having so terrible a road to go through. But, spight of the horror it has inspired me with, I should not scruple a moment to begin my journey, if nothing prevented, to assure you, by word of mouth; that,

I am, &c.

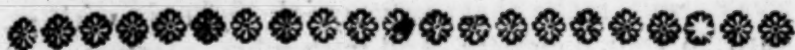


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LETTER X.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

I Wish you joy of being at last got rid of your mountains, your precipices, and torrents. Your letter brought to my mind, Hannibal, who, it is said, first cleared that terrible road. I think you would not have been proper to have followed that great man, for I think, I may, without injustice, accuse you of a little cowardice. Your poor queen shuddered, as well as you, at the sight of those precipices, which are no bad pictures of those to which she is about to be surrounded on the throne. Yes, my dear, we run less risque in descending Mount Cenis, than in living in the midst of a court and courtiers. But let not that discourage you: I told you, when you was first married, That grace is given for all situations, which you will find, if you continue to place all your confidence in God, and can say with the Prophet, *I have never turned my eyes from the heavenly mountains, whence I expect succour*. In short, my dear, you have now an opportunity to set a just value on honours, grandeur, and riches. I am sure that your distaste, for all those *counterfeit* blessings, will greatly increase; but you must not shew it, except on occasions when they would persuade you to prefer them to *heavenly* blessings. As to the rest, bear in mind, that having the charge only of your own salvation, you will not be required to answer for that of others: Moan for their evils, but so low, that no one may be witness of it.

The confidence reposed in you, by the queen, does you honour: But perhaps at the same time is preparing for you much trouble. The jealousy of your
rivals,

rivals, will make them very quick sighted, with regard to your conduct: And with what pleasure, will they execute their malignity, if you give them the least room for it? May the friendship of the queen, serve only to make you more humble!

If that princess asks your advice, inspire her with a spirit of tranquillity, which may turn her from cabals and intrigues; so, that being wholly taken up with the care of pleasing her husband, she may suffer him to govern his kingdom alone, and make use of the influence she shall thereby acquire over his mind, only for the good of his subjects. Above all, inspire her with a real tenderness for the prince of Piedmont, and the other children of her husband.

Adieu, my dear, I am so taken up about your sister's departure, that I am obliged to abridge my letter. This little creature cannot contain her joy, for being on the point of seeing you. I am convinced that the pleasure of seeing the world has as great a share in her present satisfaction, as her friendship for you. This girl sometimes frights me, without being able to say, that I as yet perceive any vice in her; she has a vivacity, a hastiness, which shews a very fiery temper. But I rely, absolutely on your care, to make the most of her character.

Adieu, again, my dearest daughter.

L E T.



LETTER XI.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I Have received a letter from my sister, dated from St. Jean de Morienne: She has borne the fatigues of the journey surprizingly well, and will pass Mount Cenis to-morrow in the finest season. At the foot of the mountain she will find the marquis's old valet de chambre, who will take care to provide her the most expert chairmen, so that you may be at ease on that head.

We have been in a continual whirl here, which has scarcely left me a moment for reflection. I cannot, however, help making some, by stealth, about the stir which is made to please the new queen. Twenty women, whom I scarce know, load me with caresses, praises, and even trust me with their secrets, because that princess honours me with her favour. I might have been imposed upon by these deceitful women; but, thanks to the pains they took to hurt each other, I have seen them unmasked. I have a boundless inclination for you, said one of them to me, some days ago, and therefore, as a friend, I will acquaint you with the characters of a thousand women, to whom if you grant your friendship, it will be highly prejudicial to you; and immediately she began a history, in which she took care to inform me, that those she was calumniating, had spoke disrespectfully of me. It was to no purpose to tell her, that I despised such things, and had no curiosity relating to other people's actions, nothing could stop her tongue, and, I think, she would have talked till this time, if one of those, whose picture she had just drawn, had not interrupted our conversation. They embraced each other, with

the greatest shew of cordiality, and the latter remaining mistress of the field, in her turn drew a picture of her friend, with a pencil dipp'd in gall.

I own to you, dear mother, it gave me great pain to hear so much slander. It was of no use to appear unattentive, displeased, and indifferent : Possessed with the pleasure of maligning their rivals, they did not suspect the pain they gave me. Why did not I candidly tell them, once for all, that I am a Christian, and that charity does not permit me to listen to such slander ?

But it is not only in this respect that my ears are put to the rack ; purity of manners is not better treated, in this country, than charity. A virtuous woman, said an old libertine, some days ago, is one, who, preserving outward appearances, has managed her matters so well, that the public has never come to the knowledge of her frailties ; avoid the scandal, and you avoid the crime ; I must confess it is a little troublesome, added he, she must constrain herself, extremely, the first years of her appearance in the world, in order to gain a good reputation ; under the shelter of which, she may, in the sequel, make herself amends for the inconveniencies she was forced to undergo. In a word, my dear mother, the marquis did not deceive me, when he told me, that there were four theological virtues at Turin, namely, faith, hope, charity, and hypocrisy. This last is in great request here ; the men having a dagger in one hand, and their beads in the other.

I have nothing to tell you of the count : The dissipation caused by the feasts which succeed one another, and the duties of his employment, do not permit him to see me often, and when he can steal a few moments, he behaves in such a manner, as to give me no cause for complaint. I admire with what justice you foretold his conduct ! But I am too well informed of it to be duped by it. I cannot finish my letter, the marquis having sent to let me know that he is bringing me company.

Indeed,

A YOUNG LADY. 51

Indeed, dear madam, there are very singular customs in this country : You will never guess the reason for which they made me leave off writing. It was to give me a lover in form, who, under the name of Cicisbe, is assiduously to follow and serve me, more diligently than a valet de chambre : He is to wear my livery, to usher me to the play, the opera,* and other public places, and to take care that I am commodiously seated. As to the marquis, he is out of the question : They say it is scandalous to see us together ; we set a bad example, which they are far from following in truth ; but they cannot take too many precautions, they say, to prevent such irregularities being introduced to society, as a husband ought to be with his wife, only in the night. At first I took all this only as raillery, but they told me seriously, that there was no lady but had a Cicisbe. When, the marquis perceiving my embarrassment to make this ridiculous choice, officiously named to me the count, to act in that character. I must confess, that my blood curdled at this proposal : And I do not know but I might have been guilty of some indiscretion in endeavouring to extricate myself from this embarrassment, had not the count generously refused the office, under the pretence of being engaged. The very moment he pronounced those words, he gave me a look, which too plainly informed me, that the motive for his refusal, was only to avoid giving me displeasure.

The marquis complaining of his disappointment, told me, it was then, *my* business to make so important a choice, and desired I would present a ribbon to the person I would chuse for my knight. I then took the ribbon from my nosegay, and getting up, smiling, I fixed it to the marquis's hat, saying, I was likewise engaged, and expected, as well as the count, to have the privilege of abiding my choice. I kept up the pleasantry, and matters stopped here, as they then fell upon the count for his secret engagement, which gave him room to explain his sentiments ; which

he did, with an energy, that convinced me he is far from being cured.

What would have been the consequence, if he had given into the marquis's folly, and had laid me under a necessity of seeing, and hearing him every moment? But, admire my situation; I look for motives for his refusal, which diminish the value of the sacrifice he has made me. I would in no wise be obliged to him, and I am sorry that I *must* be pleased with what he has done. Good God! how happy was I at Chambery? And such, who (addicted intirely to their duty) are not under the constraint I am, may bless their stars for their good fortune.

Adieu, dear mother.



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LETTER XII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS, her daughter.

Dear Child,

YOU will now think my notions of morality much relaxed. I decide in favour of the Cicisbe; and I had almost, in concert with your husband, nominated the count for that office. Do not, however, condemn me upon appearances, and imagine that I advise you to admit a lover: No, those two kinds of animals, are of very different species, for it was never known, that the former ever became the favourite of the lady to whom he devoted himself. And therefore, the most jealous husband, sees with the greatest tranquillity, the assiduities of the Cicisbe, and would be pointed at if he should take offence on that account. The Chevalier de Matha was not better acquainted with those usages and customs than you are: He was, by accident, with the husband of the lady, whose livery he wore: When, the husband beginning his discourse with these words, *since you are my wife's lover*, was suddenly interrupted by the chevalier, who swore by all that was good and sacred it was calumny. So much the worse for you, replied the husband, angrily, it is not fit for me to boast of my wife; but I can say without vanity, that there are few women at court who are more deserving the assiduities of a gentleman, and you may make a worse choice. Ho! Sir, replied the chevalier, be not angry, I will *be* your wife's lover, if you will *have* it so. It shall not be said we quarrel on that account. You, my dear daughter, are in the same situation as the chevalier was: You ought to accept of a Cicisbe,

and like him, say to the marquis, It shall not be said we quarrel on that account.

I am a little more embarrassed to decide the other case on which you have consulted me. Decency does not permit you to impose silence on people, though they are beneath you; but nothing hinders, that in their presence, you dexterously introduce a discourse on slander; and then, you may easily express the dislike you have for that vice. Continue always to shew them, by your inattentive and uneasy behaviour, the little pleasure you receive from a recital of the failings of others, and, by degrees, they will understand that dumb language.

You have yet seen nothing with regard to the hypocrisy that reigns at Turin. Religion is a masque, under which they endeavour to conceal the most criminal actions. Your father made some abode in that country, and knows the Piedmontese perfectly well. What a great difference is there between the manners of these, and your honest Savoyards? And there is, indeed, a real antipathy between the two nations; who, tho' under the same dominion, are divided more by the contrariety of their sentiments, than by the mountains which separate them.

Your sister, who must be by this time with you, wrote to me from the Novalaise: From the account she gives of her journey, she seems, excuse me, more courageous than you, and is much pleased with the care of her conductor. I will not say, I *recommend* that child to you; for, being thoroughly persuaded that she will be the same in your hands, as in my own, I am perfectly easy on that account.

I have just received a letter from Nancy, (a) with which you may make your court to the queen. Mr. de la Galisiere has taken possession of it in the name of the king of Poland. The church on this occasion, rung so with the lamentations of the people, that Te Deum, which was sung to music, could scarce
be

(a) A fortified city in France.

be heard. Even those who took the oaths of allegiance, could not restrain their tears, but took for their text the general affliction, and told la Galifiere, that the grief of the people for losing their princes, was a sure evidence of their attachment to their masters, of which they would always give proofs to his majesty the king of Poland, now actually duke of Lorraine and Bar.

That prince is the fittest man in the world to comfort them: I had the honour to pay my duty to him in my last journey; I never saw a more popular man, his servants look upon him as their father, and he treats them like his children; not disdaining to enter into the minutest enquiry on what relates to them, with an air of goodness, which wins their hearts. If the great would descend a little sometimes, on proper occasions, they would find their account in it; for that respect which is founded on love, is very pleasing, as well as very solid. You are sensible of it, my dear child, and will be more so every day, if you continue to bear in mind, that nothing, in reality, distinguishes you from your inferiors: They are form'd like you, and may openly shew you some respect on account of your grandeur; but they know how to make themselves amends, and reduce you to your proper place, if you do not surpass them in virtue, as well as in the gifts of fortune.

Your sister had yesterday an excellent lesson given her on this subject: The little gentlewoman is haughty, and gave herself airs, to some of her companions; one of them told her, pretty sharply, You are in the right, miss, to take upon you; we shall to be sure, be always your most humble servants, for certainly there will be a great many post-chaises broke down, in bringing marquises to marry into your family. I was pleased with the smartness of the rebuke, and made a present to her, who had so effectually humbled the girl's pride. The next day, the father came to ask pardon for his daughter's rudeness, and brought with him the child, who is but twelve years old, and who, weeping, told me, she was sorry she

she had spoken amiss. She added, with an effusion of heart which charmed me, that it was not because she was sorry to see the marchioness become a great lady, she wished, with all her heart, she was a queen, for she was a very good lady, and was never proud. Nature explain'd itself in this poor child. If she had had more judgement, she would not have *expressed* herself in the manner she did to your sister, but certainly she would have *thought* the same. Adieu, my dear, say nothing of this to your sister; she would then, be upon her guard, and I would have you see her in *puris naturalibus*.

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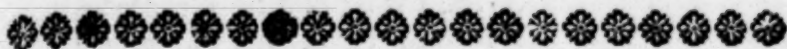
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L E T T E R X I I I .

The MARCHIONESS DE——, to Madame DU MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I Am quite proud to be in some measure in the same situation with the celebrated Voiture: My father requires of me a description of Turin: They had asked of him a description of the Valtelin, and he could never decide whether the court was before the stone steps, or the steps before the court. I am exactly in the same situation, and hope my father will permit me to bring myself off pretty near in the same manner, without giving any particular description, and that he will be pleased I should recal to his mind in general, that one sees here almost as many palaces, as houses; that the churches are magnificent; that they serve as a theatre for the ladies to display their finery in; as a place of rendezvous for lovers, and of retreat for assassins. What I write to you is strictly true: Two days ago I went with the queen to the Carmelites, and saw, upon the steps of the church, a kind of tent, from whence came out a spectre, covered with rags, who threw himself at the queen's feet. The princess, altho' she had been apprized of it, was seized with terror; judge of mine, at the sight of a man whose crimes, if I may use the expression, are written on his forehead.

The trade of this man is to assassinate any person whom a revengeful Piedmontese has a desire to get rid of, and as that desire is pretty common, amongst them, this wretch does not want employment. They assure me, that he makes no scruple to quit his asylum, in order to lend his hand to those who require it: And that he is the most noted man in the city for this execrable business.

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The queen conceived the utmost horrors at the monster, and said she should think herself guilty of a crime, if she interceded for him. Is it possible, that religion can serve as a pretext for not punishing such a man? And that under its umbrage, he can be permitted to live in the commission of such crimes?

They have here imputed to me, as a fault, my opinion on this head, and I displeased an old Piedmontese lady, who would more readily suffer our most holy mysteries, to be attacked, than the freedom of the altars. I had said, it would be but just to drag the villain from the asylum he had profaned, and put him to death. She asked me, if I should have the heart to give him up to justice, in case it was in my power so to do? I thought I could readily have answered, Yes. But, when I represented to myself the wretch at my disposal, it seemed that my horror diminished, to give place to compassion. I should not be sorry he were punished, but find I should have some repugnance to give him up myself, to the chastisement he deserves.

Explain to me, dear mother, whence arise in me such contradictory sentiments: But yet which were the opinion adopted by all the company, to whom I communicated them. Does the first offend against humanity? and is the second a weakness, and contrary to justice?

But I have stopped too long upon so disagreeable a subject, and ought to give you an account of a concert, with which we were entertained, in that church. The music was excellent, and the voices, the finest I ever heard; but the place to me seemed very unfit for such a diversion, as it occasioned much irreverence; the house of the Lord ought to be a house of prayer; but here the applauses given to the performers were so loud and tumultuous, that no one seemed to imagine he came there to adore the Supreme Being. I vainly endeavoured to do it, I was pointed at, and was officiously talked to every moment: Luckily for me, the count was of the party, and as
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A YOUNG LADY. 59

there is no man I less fear to mortify, I told him, so as to be heard, that I came to church to say my prayers; and, therefore, desired I might not be disturbed: The marquis could not help blushing at my speech, and told me, at our return, that I should appear ridiculous: But at last I made him own I was in the right.

The evening of the same day, the marchioness of St. G—, thought fit to make a jest of what she calls bigotry. The queen, who for good reasons, does not love her, took that occasion to mortify her, by applauding my behaviour. You cannot imagine what effect this produced, nothing could be more edifying than our ladies to-day at church, and the queen could not help laughing with me at the metamorphosis.

My sister has had the honour to kiss the queen's hand, this morning, that princess behaved to her with the greatest kindness, and presented her to the king. I must own to you, I was surprized at the courage the child shewed on the occasion: The court seems to be her native country, and she has nothing of that borrowed air, which I cannot intirely get rid of. In many other respects she likewise behaves very well, but I cannot help trembling for her: She loves the world: It seems formed to please her. What dangers must she not undergo? I do my utmost to gain her confidence, and I think I succeed in it, but that will not hinder me from studying her closely, to prevent her deceiving me, if she should attempt it.

My husband loves her beyond expression, and repeats to her, I think, a little too often, that he will make her fortune: The poor girl seems not to need being inspired with such sentiments; but behaves so as if she reckoned on fixing here. I only guess at her disposition, for I assure you, I have no room to complain of her conduct: And nature has no disguise at her age.

We are to go to-day to a French play, for the first time; a tragedy is to be acted, which they tell me

me is very affecting. My husband says, he shall have great pleasure in observing us, and assures me, I shall not be able to restrain my tears; I can scarce believe the illusion of the representation, will have such an effect.

I am, &c.



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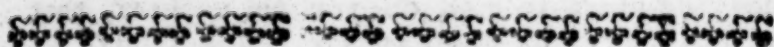
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LETTER XIV.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS;
her daughter.

Dear Child,

YOU have reason, my dear, to be scandalized at the strange abuse, which reigns in Italy, on account of the privilege of the altars; asking the Piedmontese ladies pardon, if it was in my power, there should be no asylum which could secure from the hands of justice, a monster, like him, you have described in your letter. A miracle must be wrought to convert such a man: And, as you have observed, by giving him his life, you only furnish him with an opportunity of multiplying his crimes; not to mention, that you, in some measure become an accomplice in the crimes he continues to commit. However, spight of all these reasons, I do not know whether I could resist the inclination of saving the life of a criminal, were it in my power: Humanity is affected, when we consider, a wretch, on the point of suffering a punishment, tho' due to his crimes; and we still hope, he may happily return to virtue. I am, nevertheless, persuaded that it is a weakness; but as it is mine, and that of all good people, I will endeavour to justify it by an example.

Last year I was in the country, with a priest, more than fourscore years old, who gave me the following relation.

That, about forty years ago, he was called upon to prepare a highwayman for death; with whom he was closely shut up in a *little*; (a) and, whilst he was exerting his utmost persuasion to excite him to repentance for his crime, the man appeared to be so in-

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attentive,

(a) A place appointed for the reception of condemned persons.

attentive, that he scarce listened to him. Dear friend, said the priest to him, do you not consider, that in a few hours you must appear before God? What then can take off your mind from an affair of so great importance to you? You are in the right, father, said the robber; but I cannot get it out of my head that it is in your power to save my life; and that thought has intirely diverted me from the matter in hand. What can I do to save your life? answered the priest; and tho' it were in my power, ought I to risque the doing it, and thereby give you an opportunity of accumulating your crimes? If nothing else prevents you, rejoined the criminal, you may depend upon my promise. I have seen death too near me, to expose myself to its terrors again.

The priest, in short, did, what you and I should have done on the like occasion; he suffered himself to be prevailed upon, and now nothing remained but to know how it could be accomplished. The chapel they were in was lighted but by one window, which was near the roof, and above fifteen feet from the floor. You have nothing to do, said the robber, but to set your chair on the altar, which you see is portable; do you get up on the chair, and I will mount on your shoulders, from whence, I may securely get upon the roof, and then leave the rest to me. The priest gave into the contrivance, and afterwards sat composedly in his chair, having first restored the altar to its place.

At the end of about three hours, the hangman, who grew impatient, knocked at the door, and ask'd the priest what was become of the criminal. He was certainly an angel, answered the ecclesiastic, gravely; for on the word of a priest, he went out at that window. The hangman fearing to lose the wages of death, ask'd the father, if he jest'd or not? and being answered in the negative, ran to inform the judges of it. They came to the chapel, when the good man keeping his seat, shewed them the window, and assured them, on his conscience that the criminal fled thro' it; and that he had almost recommended him-

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A YOUNG LADY. 63

himself to him, as taking him for an angel; but added, that if he was a criminal, he was not appointed to be his keeper. The magistrates could not help smiling at the gravity of the priest; and having wished the highwayman a good journey, they departed.

About twenty years after the father going over the Ardenne, missed his road, towards the close of the evening: A peasant having examined him very attentively, asked where he was going, and assured him, the road he was about to take was very dangerous; and added, that if he would follow him, he would bring him to a farm, which was not far off, where he might pass the night safely. The father was greatly embarrassed, as the curiosity the man had shewed in examining his person, had filled him with suspicion: But, considering, that if he had any evil designs against him, he could not escape, he, trembling, followed him. His fear was of no long duration: He perceived the farm of which the peasant had spoke; and the man, who was master of it, on his entrance, bid his wife kill the best capon in their yard, and treat his guest well.

Whilst they were preparing supper, the peasant came in, followed by eight children: And said to them, Children, thank this good father; but for him, you had not been in this world, nor I neither, for he saved my life. The priest, surprized at what he heard, and looking stedfastly on the man, recollected the features of the robber whom he had assisted in making his escape. He was loaded with the caresses and thanks of the whole family; and when he was alone, with the peasant, the father asked him by what chance he was so well settled. I have kept my promise, said the robber; for being resolved to lead an honest life, I begged my bread to this place, where I was born; I hired myself a servant to the master of this farm, and having gained his favour, by my honesty and diligence, he gave me his daughter in marriage, who was his only child. God has blessed my endeavours: I have laid up some little mat-

ter, which I will readily yield up to your disposal; and shall now die satisfied, since I have seen you, and have an opportunity of shewing you my gratitude.

The priest thanked him, and said, he was sufficiently paid for the services he had done him, since he had made so good use of the life he had been the means of preserving. He would accept of nothing that was offered him, but consented at the farmer's request, to stay some days longer with him, by whom he was treated in the most friendly manner. At his departure, the peasant courteously offered him the use of one of his horses to finish his journey, and did not leave him till he had passed all the dangerous ways, which were very numerous in that part of the country.

This, dear child, is an example proper to justify our weakness: But twenty others might be cited, which proves, that the gallows seldom misses its prey; and that such sort of people are very seldom reformed.

I have often made the like reflections with you, on account of the festivals given in churches; nothing is more proper to elevate the heart, to God, than music; but such is the lot of the best usages, which have any relation to the pleasures, of the senses, that we forget the end for which they were instituted, and confine ourselves only to the pleasure they yield us. As to the rest, I cannot blame your conduct on that occasion; you are a christian, and ought never to blush for appearing to be so in the eyes of the world.

I am not surpriz'd at what you tell me of your sister; she has a big heart, and, since your marriage, has always thought nothing to be above her reach: In other respects, her character is very well, and I hope you may be able to make some advantage of that defect, which the world calls greatness of mind, but which is, really nothing more than true pride. I should not voluntarily, have exposed her to the dangers of the world, were it not my greatest devotion to abandon all things to the guidance of providence.

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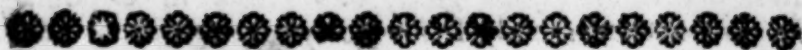
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I should think myself guilty of a crime in opposing its dispositions; and, I say to you, again, it furnishes us with grace, proper, for the condition it destines us to: I therefore revere its orders. It was providence disposed your husband's heart in favour of that child, let us not intermeddle with what he will do in her favour, but let us endeavour to guard her against the dangers of the state to which God calls her. That person is sacred in the midst of a court, who would have missed of salvation in the solitude of a cloyster, if shut up there without a proper vocation.

You depend too much on your philosophy, when you imagine you shall not be affected with grief at the hearing of a good tragedy. I have laugh'd often at my folly, but yet, at the time, I wept as heartily at another. Your story will be the same. You will weep, my dear child, tho' you will laugh at your weakness when you return. I have thought many times on the use which might be made of the theatre, for the correction of manners: Certainly there might be derived from it, very powerful means to incline us to virtue; yet, authors, seem to have forgot that good end and purpose of the drama. But, I shall say no more to you on this subject, for fear of prejudicing you, and I would know your sentiments, before I tell you mine.

I am, &c.



LETTER XV.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame de
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

YOU will doubtless pardon my silence, when you shall know the strange accident which occasioned it.

The day I was to go to the play, I was taken so ill that it was fear'd I should miscarry. My physician forbid my going abroad. And as the marquis was engaged to wait on the countess of St. G——, to the house, he was obliged to leave me alone, and desired the count to keep me company. The latter, having by a look, made me sensible of the greatness of the sacrifice he was about to offer, told the marquis he thought I stood in need of repose, and that it would be proper to leave me at liberty to take it. I insisted strongly that my husband should follow that advice, and the count accompanied him to the play. I had been in bed all the day, and finding myself much better, I got up, about eleven o'clock at night, pleased with the notion of surprizing the marquis at his return. Madame de St. G—— was engaged after the play, so I knew he would return as soon as it was over. The count, who was also to sup with madame de St. G——, found the means to get rid of his engagement, under the pretext of keeping my husband company. The marquis being uneasy, on my account, they did not stay for the entertainment, but left the house the moment the play was over: The servants, who did not expect them so soon, were not at the playhouse door, so that they returned without attendance.

About a hundred paces from our house, they were attacked by seven men in masques, whom they took

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at first for robbers, but, one of them, crying out to the count that he should retire, for their business was with the marquis alone, they then knew them to be assassins. I cannot, my dear mother, help doing the count justice, far from thinking of his own safety in so unequal a combat, he seemed to be concerned only for that of the marquis; and his assistance was the more efficacious, as the assassins seemed unwilling to hurt him.

My husband, on his part, was resolved to sell his life dearly; the place was unfrequented, and having little reason to hope for succour, they fought desperately, and soon fetch'd down three of the assailants; the others, either wounded, or intimidated, took to flight. The count and my husband being come to our house, sent their servants to cause the bodies to be carried away: And the marquis, having been informed, that I was risen, ordered, that no one should say a word of the adventure, and came up with his friend into my chamber. I perceived an alteration in my husband, and thought he was displeased at my rising, but I was soon undeceived. He requested me to go to bed again, immediately, saying, they would sup by my bedside. He was about to go out of the room with his friend, to leave me at liberty to undress myself, and purposed to employ that time in taking proper measures in relation to the accident. I was then sitting in an easy chair, and rising, as they were going out, my snuff-box fell down: The count hastily approached to pick it up, and the instant he was giving it to me, he reeled, and fell down at my feet. The marquis, and one of my women, who was in the chamber, ran immediately to his assistance, and unbuttoned his coat to give him air. When, judge you of my fright, the count's shirt was all over blood. He had been wounded, but from the heat of the combat, had not been sensible of it. The great coat he had on, (for the weather was cold) had prevented our perceiving the quantity of blood he had lost; nor did he even know it himself, for, as he afterwards told us, he attributed

buted his weakness to the motion caused by the engagement.

My husband, with the assistance of the servant, laid the count on my bed, and bid me not be frightened, for he knew the cause of the accident. By this time the servants were all come up, for I had almost broke my bell to pieces with ringing it. They put the count into my bed, and it was sometime before he received his senses; but a surgeon, who was instantly sent for, having searched his wound, assured us he was not in danger.

My husband now found himself obliged to tell me what had happened, but kindly conceal'd from me, that, which would have given me the greatest inquietude. He said, they had been attacked by two robbers whom they had put to flight.

The count now began to recover his senses: But, as the first surgeon was brought, only because he was nearest at hand, another, afterwards was fetched, very eminent in his profession, who, finding the count in a fever, took the marquis aside, and told him, he was afraid his friend had been wounded with a poisoned weapon: He was confirmed in that opinion, after having examined the wound, and told us, there were no hopes of saving his life, but by immediately cutting off his arm, to prevent the poison from spreading. And, before the arrival of two of his brethren, who were sent for, on his request, he bound up the arm above the wound, and gave the patient a large quantity of Theriaca.

This circumstance of poison, opened my eyes. The marquis, then own'd to me the whole truth. And, now, I was divided betwixt my fears for my husband's future safety, and compassion for the present situation of the poor count, who had so generously saved my husband's life, at such extreme hazard of his own. That generous friend, more regardful of my happiness; than his own condition, told me, in few words, that though the event should occasion his death, yet he thought himself happy in preserving the life of a husband, so worthy of my affection.

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affection. I forgot, in that moment, that it was a lover who spoke to me ; and my gratitude had such an ascendancy over every other consideration at the time, that I could not help saying to him, Live, my dear count, to partake of my friendship and esteem, I know not which of you will, hereafter, be most dear to me.

In the mean time, the three surgeons had a consultation : As the wound was only in the fleshy part of the arm, they agreed it would be sufficient to scarify the part about the wound, which was executed upon the spot. They would have had me to retire, but I earnestly desired to be present at the operation. The count bore it with a surprizing resolution : He looked at me often, and seemed to say, he was pleased with suffering on such an occasion. I did not go to bed till they assured me there was the greatest reason to hope for his recovery ; and my husband sat up the rest of the night, and a terrible one it was to the poor count, for they had applied to the wound, medicines to expel the poison, which gave him incredible pain. For my part, I could not shut my eyes the whole night, and my uneasiness continued to the time of their first dressing the wound in the morning ; when the surgeons assured me the patient's life was out of danger.

My husband was, now, in a condition to examine into the situation of the three assassins, whom they had left upon the spot. Those wretches, he found, had been carried to the hospital. But, as they were lifeless, no information could be got of this dreadful adventure, which gives me unspeakable uneasiness. The marquis, 'tis evident, has enemies, and it will be difficult, I fear, to escape their treachery. If I might advise, we should instantly quit a city, which was so near being fatal to us. I have made known my opinion to the marquis, who laughs at my fears, and tells me, he hopes, e'er long, to discover those who set the assassins to work. Adieu, my dear mother, pray the lord, to proportion my strength, to the strokes he destines for me.

P. S.

P. S. I forgot to tell you that the marquis is enchanted with my sister's affection and compassion. He himself, informed her of the accident; and she no sooner knew, that he owed his life to the count's valour, than she got up with the greatest transport, and kissed the patient's hand. This first emotion gave us all great pleasure: And my husband, particularly, said, he should never forget it as long as he lived. She is the count's nurse, and never leaves him but when decency requires it.



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LETTER XVI.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

I Shuddered at reading your letter, and without endeavouring to alarm you about the consequences of the assassination, which had like to have deprived you of your husband, I shall exhort you, to neglect no precautions, for the future, which prudence can dictate to you. Without doubt, the marquis *has* enemies, and they may possibly take more certain measures to destroy him; poison, for example. Let your husband use the greatest circumspection on that account. Let him eat only in safe houses, and take no refreshment in public places. But, my dear, after having done all in your own power, throw yourself into the hands of that providence, which supply'd you with succour in the person of the count, who, in so unexpected a manner, accompanied your husband the night he was attack'd. That circumstance alone gives me comfort. God watches over the marquis's safety. What mortal, then, will be able to hurt him? I cannot condemn your having shewn your gratitude to the count in the manner you did, I even exhort you to continue it. For, since all your gratitude, is founded on that to your husband, the count can draw no consequences from it, but what will be destructive to his love. This is, perhaps, the only means of extinguishing the passion of the poor count, whom I pity, and love, with all my heart. Your father has writ to the marquis, to wish him joy of his escape from this danger: I have added a few lines to his letter, and desire you will reiterate, what I there beg of the marquis, that he will neglect nothing for his preservation.

I am, &c.

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LETTER XVII.

The MARCHIONESS DE——, to Madame DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

WE have the greatest reason in the world, to return thanks to God; and I take the first opportunity of writing, that I may free you from the uneasiness, I am sure you must be under. The day after I received your letter, a priest came to our house and asked to speak with the marquis; and having taken him aside, desired he would go with him, to a man, who was at the point of death, and had something of importance to disclose to him. My husband, having imparted what had passed, to the count, and to me, we were of opinion, he should go with the ecclesiastic, whom we knew to be a man of probity. However we began to be greatly alarmed for the marquis's absence; for he was gone almost two hours.

At his return, he seemed greatly altered, and gave us the following account; that the person he was carried to, had but a short time to live; but that notwithstanding the change of his countenance, by approaching death, he knew him at first sight.

This young man, it seems, had been formerly in the service of the count, but is now in that of madame D——, a rich and beautiful widow; the marquis had been her lover, several years, and they had lived together in the greatest familiarity, even in the husband's life-time, who died during the marquis's absence. That lady, who made no doubt that he would marry her, when he was at liberty, soon informed him of her widowhood; and her letter was delivered to the marquis at Chambery, some days after our marriage. As he had taken a resolution to be faithful to me, he wrote her an answer, in which
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he acquainted her, that he had just disposed of his heart as well as his hand. This drove her almost to despair: But she flattered herself, that if she could prevail with my husband to visit her, she should regain her ascendancy over him.

She was of a rank in life, that required caution in the conduct of this affair: He therefore visited her sometimes; but tho' he carefully avoided being alone with her; yet she industriously found opportunities. She employed by turns, tears, prayers, and reproaches, but without effect; and finding she had lost him beyond all hope of recovery, her slighted love was turned into the greatest fury, and she resolved to be revenged.

Her valet de chambre was chose to execute her vengeance on the marquis; and tho' the wretch was not a novice in such crimes, yet he could not find in his heart to dip his hands in the blood of the count, whom he had served; and of whom he never had the least cause to complain. He, therefore, bid the count withdraw, and ordered the villains, his associates, to spare his old master. Doubtless by this means, the marquis's life was preserved.

The man, who had been endeavouring to make his peace with God, asked pardon, a thousand times, for the crime he had committed against my husband, and by naming his enemy, gave him a precaution against her rage; for she had sworn his destruction. My husband comforted the poor dying creature, who seemed under great agonies of mind: And having declared he would make no ill use of what had been disclosed to him, he desired the sick man would permit his deposition to be taken in writing, to which he consented, and afterwards signed it, as did also the priest, who was present at the taking the same. The marquis having furnished himself with this proof, it was his intent to oblige the enemy to sign it also, by threatening to inform the queen of her crime, if she refused. He was fully persuaded she would not dare for the future to make an attempt upon his person.

son, as she well knew she must be responsible for what should happen.

Whilst he was acquainting us with his resolutions, he received a letter from that wretched woman. She had been informed of his visit to her accomplice; and having no hope that the marquis would be so generous as to forgive her, she gave herself up to despair! and concluded her letter with these words. "I have deprived you of your victim; and the poison, which I have this moment taken, will, in few hours, put me out of the reach of your vengeance." I shuddered at the reading these lines, and being moved with compassion for the soul of this miserable woman, I begged the marquis would let me go immediately to her assistance. He did not oppose my resolution; but fearing I might be in some danger from the fury of a rival, he said he would accompany me thither.

We found her lying on a couch, her looks wild, and despair painted in her countenance. At sight of me she screamed out, and said, are *you* come to insult, in her last moments, a wretch, whose destruction you have been the occasion of? Well, madam, contemplate your handy-work, and live happy with an ingrate, whose life had never been safe, if I had not put an end to my own.

I cannot possibly express to you the conflicts I underwent, in that moment. Pity gave place to indignation, and I was tempted to give up this furious woman to her fate. But God was then pleased to inspire me, with a fortitude, which amazes me. I sat down by her, and gently squeezing her hand, I replied, No, madam, I am not a rival come to insult your misfortunes, but a friend, come to conjure you to take pity on your soul; the marquis too, who has forgot your frenzy, is come to assure you, that what is passed shall be buried in oblivion: Time is very precious, think, therefore, seriously of preserving your life, and, of expiating, by a suitable conduct, the crimes which an unhappy passion has made you commit. And can you, madam, (said this un-

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happy woman, (rising on her seat) have any concern for my life? I am thoroughly sensible of the great enormity of my guilt, and conjure you, to leave me to atone for it by my death. Then turning to my husband; I did not know my rival, said she, when I intended to deprive her of your heart. But may you live to make her happy. For me, forgiveness, both from heaven and you, is all I now can wish for. And my repentance, I hope, is equal to my fault. Here I suffered her to proceed no farther; for having in my pocket all sorts of antidotes against poison, which I have had the precaution to carry about me ever since I received your last letter, I pressed her to take that which was fittest for her, to which she consented, and the remedy was applied just time enough to save her life. But during two days she suffered inexplicable torture. I never left her, only those moments which she had passed with a priest she sent for, and who was highly satisfied with her contrition. I cannot express her gratitude to me. Yesterday, according to my custom, I went to pass the afternoon with her; she appeared to be thoughtful, and desired me to leave her alone, assuring me I had nothing to fear from her fury.

This morning I received a letter from her, which was so bathed with her tears, as to be scarce legible. She therein deplored her ill conduct, in terms capable of softening the heart of a barbarian. If the sage ecclesiastic, who was her guide, had not, she said, moderated the effects of her repentance, she would have published her crimes, and exposed herself to the punishment she deserved.

She is now gone, she says, to expiate them in an austere retirement, and the greatest sacrifice she makes to God, is, to be separated from me; but that she is not worthy to be in my presence, and is thoroughly sensible how much reason I have to dread the sight of her. In short, my dear mother, this poor woman has left us filled with the utmost compassion for her. What reflections has not this adventure occasioned me to make? Surely this woman is not constitutionally

cruel; her heart was only sensible to tenderness, but by giving way to an unhappy passion, she fell into an abyss, whence nothing but a miracle of the divine mercy, could extricate her.

I have a thousand more things to say to you on this head, but I find my letter is already too long, and I must say a word or two of the count, who is so well recovered, that he would have returned to his own house, if my husband had suffered him, and I think, he is not displeased to be a little forced on that account. Why will he not be content with my esteem, without disturbing my repose? I cannot possibly be mistaken, for his passion plainly appears, thro' the constraint he puts on, to conceal it from me. I sincerely pity him, and, tho' he has given the most convincing proofs of his affection to my husband, yet, I cannot, without trembling, be a witness to the progress of so dangerous a passion. It was capable of producing a thorough change in the affections of the unhappy woman I have been speaking of, and why may it not have as great an effect on the probity of the poor count? God preserve me from the misfortunes, which, I fear, perhaps, without any foundation.

Alas! what is the happiness of this life? Every thing seems to favour my wishes: I excite the envy of all the women of my acquaintance, who propose my situation in life, as a model of what each of them would willingly obtain; but could they look into my heart, they would there see such inquietudes, as almost rend it in pieces. To all these troubles is added another, which, if my duty to you permitted, I would willingly conceal from you: My sister is so altered, that you would hardly know her; ever since the accident happened to my husband, she has lost all her gaiety, and appears thoughtful and disturbed: In vain I have caressed her, in vain questioned her; she lays it all to my husband's danger, which she says, she has continually before her eyes. Now, tho' I do not know, nor can even guess with any certainty the cause of this alteration, yet I am of opinion she is
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not sincere. I should be almost inclined to think she is in love, tho' since this change in her behaviour, we have seen no company.

The marquis being obliged to pay his attendance at court, we have passed whole hours, in the count's chamber, without saying a word; he looks at me, and sighs, I, with downcast eyes, lament his condition. And, my sister, tho' she *seems* quite taken up with her work, examines us, however, very narrowly, and sighs in her turn. Perhaps I shall at last discover the cause of her melancholy, in the mean time, pray let me know your opinion.

I am, &c.



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LETTER XVIII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS, her daughter.

Dear Child,

I Told you, my dear, that God has been pleased to set a guard over the marquis's life; you ought, therefore, without reserve, to rely on the care of that vigilant and tender father.

I shuddered at that part of your letter in which you describe the conflict you were forced to have with nature, in the interview you had with your enemy. God has given a blessing to your designs: And it must be a great comfort to you to think, that he has been pleased to make use of you as the instrument of bringing her to a due sense of her condition. I am quite of your opinion, that this woman's *mind* was rather *weak* than *wicked*. But do not mistake, my dear, that easiness and effeminacy of soul (if I may be allowed the expression) is the worst of all dispositions. I am not terrified if some evil inclinations appear in persons of sense and resolution, as I know their struggles will be great, and if they have ever so little sense of religion, they will be in the end victorious. She, on the contrary, who is of too easy a temper, is susceptible of every kind of impression. The violence of her passions, will furnish her with strength, and make her capable of the greatest efforts to gratify them; vainly, then, will reason shew her the danger, for wanting courage to resist the torrent, she will be carried away by it. I could not spare this remark, in the hope of making you easy with regard to the count; you have no need to fear him with respect to your husband, and you have nothing to do, but to keep a strict hand on your own heart, but above all let me intreat you, not to carry your precautions too far. You fear God, and love your husband, which are two fences

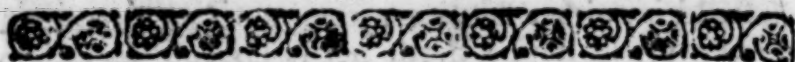
fences not easily leaped over, more especially as your husband is neither fickle nor jealous. And I must tell you, you will have a third, not so difficult indeed to be surmounted. In short, you have a rival so much the more redoubtable, as love will make her search very narrowly into your sentiments.

I think, my dear, I have found out the riddle; your sister is certainly in love with the count. Her attention in observing you both, is a proof of it: I say farther, and I am certain of it, she has discovered the count's regard for *you*: But I will not undertake to say, that she knows the full extent of her affections to *him*: Her innocence may yet, perhaps, for a considerable time, keep her in ignorance of it, and I think it is not at all necessary to clear up that matter to her. But I am amazed, the girl should take a fancy to a man, so much disproportioned to her in years. Perhaps, gratitude for the service he did your husband, and what she saw him undergo on that account, may have given a stir to her passions, and then, we need not wonder, if a young and tender heart is easily engaged.

Do your best endeavours, my dear child, to make her sensible how much it concerns her to set a watch over the first emotions of her heart. Let her know she can be mistress of those emotions, only, thro' the grace of God; and engage her to pray for it, without ceasing. I hope the count will soon be in a condition to return home; she will not then see him so often, and perhaps, absence, dissipation, and the inconstancy natural to one of her years, may efface those impressions, which cannot as yet be very deep.

Adieu, dear child, put your trust in God: For, He only, can produce our felicity from things, which seem the most contradictory to it.

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LETTER XIX.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to MADAME DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

HER E's another party for the play baulked, I think, for my part, it is decreed, That some accident shall always happen, whenever my husband has an intention to carry me to the play.

The count being perfectly cured of his wound, his first going abroad was celebrated by a little entertainment: We dined at La Mente, with a select company invited by my husband, and came away, towards the evening, to be at the house before the play began: The gentlemen amused themselves by the way, with the efforts I should make to refrain from tears, and every one was pleasing himself with the thought of sitting next me; when we arrived at the house, we were told, they should not play that day, on account of the principal actor being sick. Sick! said a man, who came to the door at the time with us, 'tis of a fright then, for it is well known, he made a somerset (a) without receiving the least hurt. This discourse was a riddle to us, who had passed the day in the country; but we were soon let into the meaning of it.

The marchioness D——, who is commonly called the favourite, took it into her head, to fall in love with the actor who plays the principal characters: And this poor fellow, tickled with the thought of being rival to a king, entered headlong into the amour, and was yesterday introduced into the marchioness's house; but he had scarce been half an hour in her apartment, before somebody knocked violently at the door. Our hero, who would have
given

(a) A tumbler's term.

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given his ears not to have been there, had no means of escaping, but by leaping out of a window, which he prudently did, and took refuge at the house of the French ambassador. I do not, said the man, make the least scruple to tell you this adventure, for the whole town knows it, and it has been pretty handsomely commented upon amongst my acquaintance. Is it possible, said an old lady, there should be any women so regardless of themselves as to stoop to a player? And are we not bound in duty to our sex to despise such creatures? The women in my younger days, were much more reserved, and their foibles were never pardoned, but in proportion as they could justify them by the condition of the lover they chose. All the company approved of what the old lady said, but I was as much astonished at it, as if I had never heard that detestable maxim before.

They do not think they have a right to despise those who commit sin, because God has prohibited it, but by reason the guilty do not observe in the commission of it, the rules laid down, by the world, for that purpose. Nothing is more readily pardoned here, than gallantry, provided, say they, the woman behaves with circumspection and decency. Buff's maxim is in every one's mouth, and if they dared, they would have it wrote over their doors.

Love does not undo us,
But our manner of making Love.

Without doubt the irregularities of the Italian women, may be attributed to this false notion, as well as to the badness of their education. For here a girl is no sooner past her childhood, than she is given to understand, that a woman is to be valued only for the number of her lovers, and that love alone can procure her real happiness. To this end, her gover-
nante spares nothing to make her pupil capable of inspiring great and extraordinary passions; and, indeed, they are consummate in the art of coquetry.

I was surprized on my arrival here, to meet with women of very narrow capacities, and, in other re-
spects,

spects, grossly ignorant, discoursing very pertinently whole hours, upon love, and its effects. Girls, thirteen or fourteen years of age, and just come out of a convent, appear to me as knowing, as the most experienced in this subject.

The religious houses, in this country, are rather schools of gallantry than asylums of piety and innocence. A girl, before she comes out of them, makes trial of her growing charms, upon some of the gentlemen, who assiduously frequent the grate. They seldom quit the nunnery, but to be married, and are perfectly indifferent, as to the choice made for them. Because a husband serves only as a commodious cloak, under cover of which, they propose to gratify their inclinations. I had often heard that the Italians were jealous, and imagined it was of their wives; but I was in an error. A husband sees his wife's gallantry with great tranquillity; but, if his neighbour's wife, with whom he is in love, takes the liberty of speaking familiarly to any other but himself, he becomes furious. This is productive of the most extraordinary scenes: I have been twenty times in company, where the mistress has done the honours of her house extremely well. The presence of her husband, did not prevent her from making due returns to the compliments paid her, by some of the gentlemen her visitors; she supported the conversation with an agreeable sprightliness and gaiety; when, of a sudden, her good humour was eclipsed; a reserv'd and serious air assumed its place, and she seemed to me so greatly constrained, as not daring, even, to cast an eye on the men, but to take a pride in treating them rudely, for she would scarce answer the most indifferent questions, the whole company, instead of being disgusted at such a proceeding, seemed to countenance her behaviour, for another lady undertook to do the honours of the circle, and soon *Her* good humour vanished. Surprized at such a metamorphosis, I took the first opportunity to ask the marquis the cause of it, who informed me, that the arrival of those lady's lovers produced so sudden a change in them. That they

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they were forced to take great care of offending the delicacy of the admirer, then in waiting, who would not pardon a word, or even a look, which might be interpreted in favour of another, and who, for the least slight or inattention, would make no scruple of taking vengeance on those they should suspect to be their rivals.

How greatly I compassionate these miserable victims to a criminal passion! When the most virtuous woman, would think it a punishment, to be compelled to such a behaviour in her *husband's* presence. And, what is worse, it is impossible ever to reclaim them from such irregularities. When I first came here, I contracted a familiarity with some women, whom I thought virtuous, who were mentioned with great encomiums, and who were even proposed to me as models; I was delighted with their great piety, and condemned my own lukewarmness, when I saw with what ardour, they performed the duties of religion. Judge how great was my amazement, when one of those women, whose confidence I had gained, discovered to me an intrigue (that no other person but myself was unacquainted with,) which she had carried on for several years: But, her astonishment surpassed mine, when I desired her to reflect on her crime, and the dreadful consequences of eternal misery. I cannot help shuddering, when I call to mind the profane discourse, which she uttered to me on that occasion; Love, said she, is the most natural, and amiable passion of man, and if we obey its dictates, can God, who has planted it in us, impute it to us as a crime? Can God, who is infinitely above us, be offended at the actions of poor vile creatures like us? and stoop so low as to punish us, for making use of a heart which he has formed so greatly susceptible of tenderness? Custom authorizes a love engagement, and the constancy, nay, the fury, with which we give ourselves up to it, justifies us in the sight of mankind.

Such, my dear mother, are the horrible sentiments which they instil into the minds of the young women in this country, and this will make me careful of never

never parting with my sister out of my sight: It is true, she seems to be as greatly displeased as I am, with the behaviour and conduct of these women, but who can answer, that in the end, their pernicious discourse may not make some impression on her?

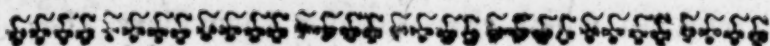
I have narrowly examined her since your last letter, and cannot perceive any thing which confirms your suspicions of her; and, I think, her affection for us, is the sole cause of her regard for the poor count, whose passion for me, seems every day to increase, which gives me great uneasiness. I fear, least that love, which my husband will certainly discover, should be made use of as a pretext.——But, I ought to smother suspicions, which perhaps are groundless, and are certainly injurious to the marquis.

• Adieu, dear mother, I am in a melancholy situation, and foresee innumerable misfortunes. How much I want to see you, that I may tell you the whole grief of my heart.



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LETTER XX.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

YOU terrify me, my dear child, you are full of suspicions and fears, which you give me a glimpse of, but, hesitate to lay open your heart to the tenderest of mothers. I have vainly endeavoured to find out the meaning of your last words: I perceive, however, you are afraid you should be wanting in your duty to the marquis, by discovering to me something concerning him; but, my dear girl, consider the use I should make of the secret you would impart to me, may I not be able to cure those suspicions, which you yourself own may be groundless? And, if they have any foundation, may I not provide you a remedy for the misfortune you prognosticate, or, at least, assist you in making a good use of them? The divine providence, which has hitherto, as it were, led you by the hand, is minded perhaps to make trial of your virtue, and by mixing some bitterness with the sweets you have, hitherto, enjoyed in profusion, may intend to shew, that perfect felicity is not to be expected in this life. I shall be uneasy, 'till you inform me of the cause of your fears, which I conjure you to do, so soon as you shall receive my letter.

I am not in the least surprized at what you tell me of the Italian ladies, and should not have been a dupe to their hypocrisy; your father, who is perfectly well acquainted with their character, has given me a full history of it; and it would astonish you, if you were to discover all the sources of their irregularities. Superstition may be considered as the head spring, and how greatly does it not reign in Italy? The debauchery of the monks, is at its utmost height, and

should we wonder, if such blind guides, lead others to the precipice? Being interested in justifying excesses, to which they abandon themselves, they do it, to the prejudice even of religion, which they render deformed, and which they leave the common people ignorant of, substituting to it idle and unprofitable customs and ceremonies, in which they make the whole of religion to consist. I must confess, I should have very little attachment to the Faith I was born in, if I had known it only in the country where you reside; and, I am sometimes, tempted to deny the name of Christian, to the greatest part of that people. This brings to my memory a pretty extraordinary passage. A mahometan, having taken a liking to the christian religion, opened his mind to a turkish priest, his friend. The latter, instead of opposing his inclination, advised him to take a voyage into Italy. before he came to a resolution; to which the other consented. He was horribly offended, when he came there, at the behaviour of the ecclesiasticks, and wrote back to his friend in the following terms. "I am become a christian, being fully convinced that the religion of Christ is divine, since it has been able to support itself, in spite of the bad conduct of those who preach it."

This is the conclusion you ought to draw, my dear, from those excesses, with which you are so justly displeased. The licentiousness of the ministers who preach a religion, ought not to be brought as a proof against the religion itself, which condemns those irregularities. But do you not admire to what a length the libertinism of the Piedmontese ladies have carried me? They differ very little from women of a certain rank in all countries. The Court, is the place where provision is made of easy convenient maxims: But only women of the first rank can advantage by them, as they only can safely intrigue: Whereas at Turin, the corruption extends even to the lowest rank of people. Do not fear the being suspected of singularity in this respect, for self-love alone is sufficient, to engage any sensible woman to follow the

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the advice I give you. The libertines, who deride you openly, will respect you in their hearts, even against their inclinations. 'Tis a tribute they are compelled to pay to virtue, when it is sincere and unaffected.

I do not mention your sister, for I trust her conduct intirely to your care. I pity the poor count, and surely the marquis is a man of more probity, than to make an ill use of a passion, which you have never encouraged. I repeat it to you, my dear child, I want much to have an explication of that article: In vain I have endeavoured to take my thoughts off it. You will easily perceive in reading this letter, that I was scarce myself when I wrote it; and I am so fully persuaded, I have observed no method in it, that I will not read it over again, lest I should be tempted to tear it in pieces.

I am, &c.



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LETTER XXI.

The MARCHIONESS DE——, to Madame DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

HOW painful is it to me, not to open my whole heart to you? Even the great necessity I am under of receiving your advice, can scarce excuse my imparting to you a secret, which will ruin the marquis in your good opinion. Why cannot I (a victim to the misfortunes his infidelity is preparing for me) hide it from all the world? But in my melancholy situation, I must have a guide, which induces me to pour into your bosom, that affliction which I cannot bear up against.

Some time has passed, since I thought I perceived my husband to grow cool towards me; his respect for me was still the same; but how easy is it to distinguish between that regard which springs from the heart, and that, which has no other source, but duty and decency! My esteem for the marquis has often occasioned me to accuse myself of doing him injustice; but I was convinced, past all doubt, the day before yesterday, both of my own misfortune and his weakness.

About six months ago, mention was made to me of a young woman of a good family, who was undone by the loss of a Law-suit. She was the more to be pitied, as she had been brought up in plenty, and had no means of getting a livelihood. I expressed a desire to see her, and the persons who had undertaken to represent her case, brought her to me, the next morning: Her countenance pleased me: Innocence, modesty, and candour, appeared thro' her whole deportment.

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She was but twenty years old, and had just lost her mother, whom grief had brought to the grave. I was moved to compassion at the girl's situation; and being fearful of the dangers, to which an unexperienced young woman might be exposed to by extreme poverty, I offered that she should live with me, till something better could be done for her. She accepted my proposal with transports of gratitude; and which were redoubled, when she saw the manner in which I caused her to be treated: I considered what she *had* been, not what she *was*, and so greatly distinguished her from the rest of my women, that they became jealous of her; and to that jealousy, in one of my maids, I am indebted, for the fatal information I am going to communicate to you.

The marquis, being struck with the beauty of this girl, has seduced her by his liberality: He has given her hopes that he would keep her in great splendor, and for these two months he has lived with her in the greatest familiarity. Tho' I had evident proofs of my husband's coldness, yet I could never discover the object of his new passion; and I treated the woman, who informed me of this intrigue, as a slanderer; but she took proper precautions against my incredulity, and gave me such convincing proofs of the truth of what she told me, that I could no longer doubt of it. My first care was to enjoin her to inviolable secrecy, threatening her at the same time, if she offered to drop the least hint of it, that moment to dismiss her my service. Good God! what a sad thing it would be, should the marquis be forced to blush for his folly, before any other person but myself.

I now ordered my woman to leave me alone, and shutting myself up in my closet, I gave a loose to the most melancholy reflections. Yes, my dear mother, how great soever my love is to him, I could the more willingly forgive his inconstancy, if it prejudiced only *me*; but I cannot support the thought of the injury he does *himself*. I shudder, when I reflect on the crime he has been guilty of, in seducing a innocent girl, whom I had sheltered in his house,

as in a sacred asylum; and tremble, when I think of the consequences of it. What will become of that miserable wretch? How shall I behave to her? I cannot keep her, without becoming in some sort her accomplice; but then, what pretext can I find to get rid of her? Will he suffer it? And will not the obstacle I shall lay in the way of his passion, increase its violence? Will he not find means to see her, where-soever I shall place her? Besides, can I depend upon the tractability of that unhappy girl? Poor creature! my compassion has been very fatal to thee. Good God! I adore thy judgments; but punish *me*, only, for my husband's misdeeds. Shew him the heinousness of his present situation, and restore him to his former innocence. And you, my dear mother, aid me with your councils, for I need them much.

You cannot imagine the secrecy, with which the marquis managed this intrigue. He never shewed the least inclination to the girl, who, on her part, never cast an eye upon him in my presence: Her outward appearance was uniform and irreproachable; and I cannot conceive how she could prevent those emotions from appearing in her countenance, which certainly she must feel, thro' a consciousness of the offence she had been guilty of against God, and against me.

Dear mother, adieu. I shall expect your answer with an impatience equal to my necessities, and 'till I have received it, I will make no alteration in my conduct, for fear of doing something imprudent.

I am, &c.

L E T-



LETTER XXII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

IAM delighted, my dear child, at the resolution you have taken of imparting your grief to me: The more painful your situation, by so much the more you stand in need of consolation and advice. However, I approve of the repugnance you shewed in doing it: A virtuous woman should use her utmost efforts, to conceal from the eyes of the world, nay, even of her dearest friends, the foibles of her husband; the necessity you were under of receiving salutary councils, in such perplexing circumstances, can alone justify your placing such a confidence in me, from whom you may depend upon an inviolable secrecy: And I think you acted very prudently in enjoining the same to your chamber-maid; for I would not have the marquis even suspect, that you are acquainted with his intrigue. He has still regard enough for you, to take all possible pains to conceal it from you; and whilst he continues in that disposition, you have the greatest reason to hope he may be happily reclaimed.

The pleasures produced by a criminal intercourse, are imbittered by remorse: Disgust follows them, and the continuance of such engagements, is often owing to the indiscreet behaviour of the wife, who attempts to break it off by forcible means. We ought to wink at these things as long as we decently can. And one husband, who thinks he is not under a necessity of making reparation, returns to his duty with less repugnance; whilst another, takes off the mask, and openly falls into debauchery, because he has no hope of regaining the affections of a wife, too well informed of the injury he has done her.

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I know it must be a great affliction to you, my dear, to see your house thus abused; but as you rightly observed, you would get nothing by making a clamour about it, and the marquis would find means to see that wicked girl, were you to dispose of her in what manner you would. And as to her, nothing favourable is to be expected from her: And, I think I do not pass a rash judgment, when I assure you, it is my opinion this is not her first adventure: The first crime generally begets a remorse, which is incompatible with that tranquillity she is mistress of.

You accuse the marquis of having seduced her; perhaps she may have seduced him: That outward shew of simplicity and modesty are strong attractions to the men, but are no certain proof of an inoffensive conduct in the woman. In short, the girl acts her part so well, that I cannot help suspecting her, as I have said, of more than one intrigue. She is a very good actress, and I think the marquis, will, one time or other, blush at having been duped by her. And 'till that happy event, I would advise you to observe the following conduct. Do not in the least alter your behaviour towards her. But artfully endeavour to find her out. If I am deceived in my conjecture, and she has been really debauched by your husband, she will then merit your compassion, which you cannot carry too far; but if, notwithstanding her youth, she should be one of those artful women, who only assume a semblance of innocence and simplicity, do not entertain any hope of reclaiming her, but bend all your care to the recovery of your husband. Seem to redouble your friendship for her, and propose to the marquis to provide her some kind of settlement, and you will judge, by the manner he shall receive your proposal, of the extent of his affection for her. If any unforeseen accident should unveil the mystery, take care that you do not shew the least anger against the marquis; and, above all, avoid coming to reproaches. I would have him know the whole affliction of your heart, but leave him to *guess* it, and do you make use of no other language, but tears and caresses.

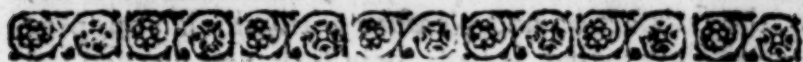
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If he seems moved to repentance, make him sensible, by the satisfaction and pleasure with which you promise to forget what is past, how little you merited the injury he has done you.

Do not express any resentment against the unhappy partner of his guilt, but on the contrary, persuade him to furnish her with the means of forsaking her crimes. But, if the marquis, thro' an inconsiderateness I cannot think him capable of, should persevere in his folly, and give a loose to it without shame; you have no remedy left, but good nature and patience. You must let him see how greatly his conduct afflicts you, and expect his return to his duty at the hand of God. From him, my child, you are to expect succour, of him you must beg it without intermission.

You do not say a word of the state of your health. I am afraid, least dejection and trouble, should be very hurtful to you, now you are so far advanced in your pregnancy. Consider, my dear, your duty to your family. There are few women who have not had a trial of the same kind, which now overwhelms you. Write to me as often as possible, and be assured that I sincerely share your grief.

L E T-



LETTER XXIII.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to MADAME DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I Wrote to you as soon as possible, notwithstanding my weakness. My silence would have caused you too great uneasiness, considering the present situation of things.

After I wrote my last letter to you, I was taken very ill, and the next day underwent the greatest pains I ever endured. My physician informed my husband he fear'd I should miscarry. He seemed to be sensibly touched with my condition; and, for twenty-four hours, whilst I was in continual danger, he gave proofs of a despair, which I can by no means reconcile with the certainty I have of his infidelity. Alas! my dear mother, how incomprehensible is the heart of man! The marquis loves me, I cannot doubt it; I know his character well, and am sure he would not be so mean, as to feign a sorrow he did not feel: His was so great, so natural, that I flattered myself I had regained my full right to his affections. The satisfaction which that hope produced, contributed, without doubt, more than any thing else, to my safe delivery; and comforted me for the death of my child, which lived but a few moments after it had been baptized. I blessed my pains, but my joy passed away like a vapour.

My rival had been very officious in assisting me; and tho' I had some repugnance in suffering her service, yet I made an offering of that, as well as of my life, to God. About an hour after my delivery, my husband, whose joy for the event most sensibly manifested itself, came to my bedside, fell on his knees, and watered one of my hands with his tears, which

which had not ceased to flow, from the moment my life was thought to be in danger: My rival could not bear the sight, she fainted away; and in that instant the marquis's heart was intirely laid open: He fled with the greatest eagerness to her assistance, and seemed under the greatest disquietude. When she came to herself, she pushed him from her with a kind of horror. At that moment, I verily believe he would have fallen at her feet, if he had not been restrained by my presence. The agitation he was in, thro' fear of incurring her displeasure, would have opened my eyes, if I had not been apprized of his falsehood.

I took a moment's recollection, that I might recommend myself to God, and summoning my whole constancy and resolution, I prevailed with myself to cause her to be set near my bed, to sooth her, and to tell her, that I attributed her indisposition to the great fatigue she had undergone the last four and twenty hours, and the uneasiness she had suffered on account of my condition. I advised her to go to bed, but, probably, she was afraid to leave me alone with my husband, and begged I would suffer her to stay in my chamber. I had seen full enough, my dear mother, but I am industrious to increase my misery; I pretended I was desirous of going to sleep, and dismissed every one, except my husband, and the girl. They withdrew from my bed, after having carefully drawn the curtains, and sat down by the fire; the girl sat with her head supported by her hands, but as her back was turned towards my bed, I could not possibly see the motions of her countenance, but those of the marquis were not obscured from me. When he thought I was asleep he fell at her feet; and it was a considerable time before he quitted that posture; during which he was pale, trembling, and disquieted, and spoke with agitation, tho' in a very low voice. Without doubt he at last effected a reconciliation; for she gave him her hand, which he kissed with the liveliest transport. As I then began to stir, an end was put to this scene, a very melancholy one to me, indeed. I can now no longer doubt of my misfortune; 'twas pity, alone,

alone, occasioned the fears the marquis shewed for my danger. By degrees, as I have recovered my health, his regard for me has diminished, and seems to be less natural; and a look which he gives my rival, whenever he speaks kindly to me, seems to inform her, that she should not be uneasy at it.

I received your letter the fifth day after my miscarriage; and it is a great pleasure to me to find that my conduct, hitherto, has been agreeable to your directions. I am now pretty well, and have almost recovered my strength. According to your advice I proposed to my husband his making some provision for the settling his girl; she was present, and he turned pale in expectation of her answer. The pretext I made use of, was my gratitude for her great assiduity in her attending and assisting me in my illness. She assured me, that she desired no other recompence, but to live with me as long as her service should be agreeable to me. This answer seemed to revive my husband, whom I pitied, and am now sorry that I gave him so great uneasiness.

I am just enter'd into a trouble of a new kind: My husband, I conjecture, has not been so cautious, during my illness, as he us'd to be before. My sister is very quick-sighted; and I perceive, when she speaks of my rival, that she is displeased with her. And the count's looks, also, give me to understand, that he has discovered the fatal secret; for he cannot cast his eyes on that creature, without indignation.

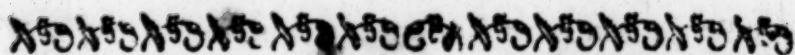
The poor count never left my anti-chamber, the whole time I was in danger; and now he scarce ever stirs out of my room. I would have represented to the marquis, that so great assiduity might be liable to a sinister interpretation; but he made a jest, of what he called, my whims. Pleased that he can have time to follow his own low concerns, I fear he encourages his friend to keep me company, and does it in a way to make me believe, he is sensible the count does him a favour. This, indeed, would be a killing misfortune to me; my husband would be lost without hope of recovery, if he could imagine, that the
count's

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count's passion would afford me consolation for *his* infidelity. Can he have so little love for me, as to think me capable of such revenge? I cannot bear the thought.

My chamber-maid, who discovered to me the marquis's intrigue, has presumed to make an ill use of the necessity I am under of keeping measures with her; she is acquainted with the count's passion; and who knows, whether he, taking advantage of my unhappy situation, may not have disclosed it to her himself? However it be, she took the liberty of advising me, to recover my husband's affection, by making him a little jealous. God forbid, added she, that I should counsel you to do any thing contrary to virtue. No, madam, I know you too well; but cannot you, without being criminal, make a shew of favouring the count's passion? He certainly loves you; and the marquis is easy in the possession of you, only because he never felt the fear of losing your affections. How greatly was I put to it, dear mother, to moderate the anger raised in me by these words of my maid I did it however, by the assistance of God, who proportions his relief to my necessities; and I find myself now inspired with a courage, beyond my natural strength. Adieu, dear mother, be under no concern for my health.

I am, &c.



L E T T E R XXIV.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS, her daughter.

BLessed be that God, my dear child, who never abandons those, who fear and serve him. If I had doubted of that truth my whole life-time, your example would have convinced me of it. Return thanks for his great mercies to you; and if he now makes trial of your virtue, it is in order to crown you with more glory hereafter. You will obtain the victory in this combat; the marquis's conduct foretells it: He has a great esteem for you, my dear, nay, he loves you. It is true, a violent passion has now got possession of him; but it is not the nature of such engagements to be durable, and you will soon see him at your feet, with sighs and groans lamenting his folly; and I doubt not, but by his future conduct, he will make you amends for the sorrow and vexation he now makes you suffer. His love for you is deeply rooted in his heart; and your chamber-maid was in the right, when she said, jealousy would awaken it; but how efficacious soever that expedient may be, it is beneath you to use it. It would certainly recover your husband's love; for such is the nature of man, that he knows not the full value of the blessings he is possessed of, 'till he is on the point of losing them: But you would thereby forfeit his esteem, or at least, you would deserve to forfeit it. A virtuous woman ought not to put in practice the artifices of a coquet; she should depend on time and patience, for a remedy to her misfortunes.

I think you do the count injustice, to suspect him of employing your maid. He is a man of more refined sentiments than to make use of such an expedient: However, be always upon your guard, avoid

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an eclairsissement upon that head, and be careful of your heart. A virtuous woman, is, at first, very sensibly affected by the injury which a faithless husband does her, but by imperceptible degrees she becomes habituated to it; sometimes it falls out, that she despises him, and then the affair concludes with a revenge which injures only herself, and authorizes the husband to persevere in his disorderly life.

I think the marquis is far from being so complaisant to the count, as you imagine. Your husband firmly believes he is master of your heart: His confidence is founded on your virtue; and as he has such sentiments, his indifference to you, can be of no long duration. I am of the same opinion with you, that your sister is very quick-sighted, and I am pleased with her anger at the wretch who causes you all this uneasiness; but she has more prudence, I hope, than to let the marquis see it. That is the only matter of consequence, which she must beware of. I cannot help condemning the artifice you made use of, to be a witness to the scene you mention. It was highly imprudent, in your condition, to seek the means of increasing your trouble; and besides, it cost you a lie. Honesty and plain-dealing, are the only ways to extricate you from the labyrinth, you are at present, intangl'd in.

I am now confirm'd in the opinion which your former letter rais'd in me. This pretended piece of innocence, is certainly an artful jilt: Her behaviour, during your illness, convinces me of it; the marquis's cure, will, I fear, be a work of time, but it will be radical; and then how much will he be out of countenance, that he should be a dupe to such mock modesty? Adieu, my dear, take care of your health, and be attentive to circumstances; providence will certainly produce such as are favourable to you, and enable you to turn them to your advantage.



LETTER XXV.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I AM quite recovered of my miscarriage ; but my troubles are increased to such a degree, that I fear I shall want strength to bear them. My rival is so altered in her carriage, that one can scarce know her to be the same. Instead of being submissive and tractable, as she was, when she first came to me, she is now become imperious to the other servants, insolent to me, and makes herself very saucily free with the marquis. The whole family are offended at it, and I am the only one who seems to be ignorant of it. Yesterday she behaved to me with such great rudeness and disrespect, that my sister could not help shedding tears, and the count was obliged to go out of my apartment, to give vent to his anger.

The next day my husband took me aside ; he seem'd to be much confounded, and it was a considerable time before he could tell in what manner he should begin his discourse. At last he told me, he was very sorry to hear of the behaviour of Rose to me, and was amazed at my great patience with her. That he was highly obliged to the count for informing him of it, and that he left it to me, to deal with her as I should think fit. Whilst he spoke to me, I trembled, and, not daring to look up at him, I answered, that perhaps the girl's crime had been exaggerated to him ; that lately, indeed, she had not behaved to me quite so respectfully as before, but an allowance ought to be made, on account of her particular situation, she being of a good family, tho' reduced to misfortunes, and who, notwithstanding the civil treatment she received from us, must be sensible she was still a servant.

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A YOUNG LADY. 101

That is sufficient, said I, to put her out of humour, and to that I attribute the alteration of her behaviour towards me. It is really very good of you, replied the marquis, embracing me tenderly, to put such a construction upon her conduct, and the sentiments of indulgence, and humanity, you have shewn on this occasion, give me great pleasure; but I'll take care, no ill use shall be made of them. One of my intimate friends, who lives at Rome, and is a widower, wants a trusty servant, to take care of his family; this will be a very good place for Rose, and I desire you will tell her, you have too great a value for her to oppose any thing that shall be for her advantage. I shall obey your will in all things, said I, and it would be a great pleasure to me, if the girl was settled in a good service. Shall I call her now? It will be soon enough to do it in the evening, replied the marquis. I will shew you the letter before her, and if she approves of it, to-morrow I will put her under the care of a guide, who shall see her safe to Rome.

No sooner had the marquis left me, than I was buried in thought. I could not tell how to reconcile so many contradictions. This girl, said I, must think the marquis has a settled affection for her, else she would not have presumed to treat me in so insolent a manner. Does the marquis really intend to send her away? or, is it only a feint? If he was disengaged from her, why was he so pleased with the good-natur'd construction I put on her actions?

I was wholly taken up with these reflections, when the count came into the room, without first sending in word, as he us'd to do. Excuse the liberty I take, said he, on account of the necessity I am under of speaking to you alone. I told him I would not hear a word, and offered to rise from my chair, in order to ring my bell, but he prevented me. For heaven's sake, madam, said he, be pleased to hear me only a word or two. I am very unfortunate, if my behaviour has not born sufficient testimony of the regard I have for you, and inclined you to place a little confidence in me. I speak to you as a friend,

madam; and, tho' an unlucky accident, discovered that my sentiments for you were of a tender kind, do not therefore refuse to assist me in compleating your happiness, (tho' it be at the expence of my quiet) by opening your husband's eyes. It is impossible to express the perturbation of my mind during the count's discourse; curiosity, hope, the fear of disobeying your commands, hurried and confused me to such a degree, that I could not come to any settled resolution. At last I recollected that part of your letter, in which you bid me avoid coming to any acquaintance with the count, and *that*, determined me. Sir, answered I, I am sensible I might safely rely on your probity: Your good qualities, your great regard for my husband, have gained my esteem and friendship, and should be glad if I could continue to merit yours: I do not absolutely refuse to hear you, but desire a little time to consider of it; being assured, that the conversation would relate only to the unhappy affair, in which you have been pleased to interpose, and that not the least mention will be made of your regard and affection. The count had fallen on his knees to prevent me rising from my chair; and he was in the same attitude, when my sister entered the chamber. Alas! dear mother, I was thunder-struck at the sight of her. In an instant, I conceived what the girl would think of it, and was ready to faint; but the count, with great prudence, extricated me from this uneasiness. He did not quit his posture, but addressing himself to my sister, who was confounded, and almost speechless, he said to her, come, miss, and assist me in bringing the marchioness to reason. A matter of the utmost importance has induced me to desire she will give me leave, to speak a few words to her in private: On my knees I have entreated the favour; but tho' she alone is interested in it, she has refused it. Her notions of delicacy will not suffer her to hear me alone; I wish I could explain the matter in your presence, but my regard for your tender age prevents me; but perhaps you are already too well acquainted with the subject I intended

to

to speak of. I conjure you therefore, persuade her, if you can, only to hear me. During these words, I had time to recover myself. I then promised I would hear what he had to say, and obliged him to rise, but absolutely insisted that my sister should be in the room, telling him, he might speak so low, that she could not overhear him. We scarce had time to recover our spirits, before the marquis returned. I am come, my dear, said he, to propose your making a little sacrifice, pray call Mrs. Rose, and let us see if you have value enough for the girl, to part with her, now her interest is so greatly concerned.

The girl appeared the instant she was sent for, and my husband read the letter he had spoke of before. I acted my part to a miracle, and I assure you, the girl perform'd hers with equal advantage; for, in a flood of tears, she threw herself at my feet, and thanked me for my civility and goodness to her.

We afterwards sat down to supper, and the marquis whispered me in the ear, that as Mrs. Rose was no longer a servant, he desired I would give her leave to sit down with us, that we might let the family see, we did not part with her in anger. I did as he desired, and I never saw him in a better humour. The girl was to depart the next morning, and the marquis undertook to see her safe fifteen miles from Turin. I have taken that opportunity to write to you; and as the situation of my affairs are too pressing, to wait for your answer, 'till the return of the post, I have desired the count to send a trusty servant, who will deliver my letter into your hands, and bring back your answer. Adieu, dear mother, pray to God for your daughter, for she never stood more in need of your prayers

I am, &c.

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LETTER XXVI.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

Dear Child,

I AM extravagantly fond of the count, and, from my heart, I think the departure of the girl, which he has so luckily brought about, will produce some favourable incident, that will put an end to all your uneasiness and trouble.

The journey to Rome is a pretty contrivance, but you must not flatter yourself, so far, as to imagine it real. Some essential reasons, certainly induce the marquis, to forego the conveniency of seeing his mistress any hour of the day; but the commerce is still certainly carried on; and I suspect, he has stronger reasons than ever, to keep matters fair with that creature, who seems to be in no fear of losing him. Since she paid no regard to good-manners, or decency, I conclude, therefore, she was in hopes, you would have turned her away at a moment's warning, which might have angered your husband against *you*, and increased his affections to *her*; but, thank God, you have avoided the snare, and have brought the marquis, himself, to desire the wretch might be sent away, which is the best thing that could befall you.

I am now going to cast the nativity of this amour. Mrs. Rose is a downright jilt, and will very soon throw off her mask; and as she will be under less constraint in her new lodgings, than she was in your house, her lover will soon find out a thousand imperfections in her, which he did not discover before. Jealousy, will, then, intrude itself and bring them to a rupture. The love we bear to virtuous persons, is augmented in proportion as we become better acquainted with them; but here the very reverse will fall

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A YOUNG LADY. 105

out. I am sure, from my knowledge of your husband's character, that he will soon be disgusted at the insolent behaviour of a girl, from whose impudence, his secret was on the point of being discovered? and will watch an opportunity to get rid of her, with as little noise as possible; which you ought earnestly to wish for.

I am greatly satisfied at the readiness with which you follow my advice; but there are occasions on which you ought to pay a due regard to circumstances. I am of opinion, the count's request merited more attention than you gave it; and I advise you to grant it. I approve of the condition you insisted on, that your sister should be present, and I think, you may make her serve as a good guard for you. As you will be very careful to have her continually with you, that will put an end to any suspicions which may have arisen from the posture she saw the count in.

You will soon know, by the steps your husband takes, whether his mistress be at Turin or not; I think you might induce the count to have an eye on his conduct. You may depend on the prudence of that friend, who really merits your greatest esteem. If I had a different opinion of you, I would not tell you so, but I think I run no risque in observing the generosity of his behaviour. The only means of curing him, are, to convince him that you love your husband, and are virtuous. The first will appear by your great concern for the marquis's actions, and the second, by your great grief for his irregularities, and your patience in bearing the injury done you.

Let your conduct to your faithless husband be the same as it has been hitherto; redouble your regard, and your complaisance, whatever may be told you relating to him. He will some day bring your indulgence to account; but though it should fall out, that his love for you should not thereby become more real, and lasting, you will at least have the comfort to know, that you have discharged your

your duty, and have no reason to reproach yourself for your own misfortunes. Adieu, my dear, trust in him who can make misfortune minister to our happiness; and be assured, that I sincerely share the melancholy situation you are now in.



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LETTER XXVII.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to MADAME DU
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

THE marquis is gone into the country for the whole day; and the count has taken that opportunity, to desire a performance of my promise. He just now delivered your letter to me; and it gives me great pleasure, to see that you approve of my granting his request.

So great was my curiosity, that I did not lose a moment's attention to the business the count has inform'd me of. He has, for a considerable time, discovered my husband's sentiments; and his regard for me, has engaged him to take such measures, that my rival cannot stir, without his being appriz'd of it.

His valet de chambre, has, by his order, made love to the girl, and that wretch, who yielded to the marquis, from motives of interest, has given herself up to the valet, from those of inclination. She is in hopes to inveigle out of the marquis, money enough to incline her lover to marry her; and I think she will carry her point, for my husband, who is naturally liberal, is prodigal, with respect to her.

Her reason for leaving me, was, that she might the more conveniently receive the visits of the valet; but a pretext was wanting, to procure the marquis's approbation of it. A growing pregnancy shewed itself very luckily, and furnished a most plausible one. She threatened my husband, that if he did not contrive a way to get her out of the house, she would discover the whole affair, even to me, rather than run the risk of being exposed by some unlucky accident.

The marquis, who is terribly afraid of a discovery, has been lavish of his gifts, caresses, and promises;
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and the count, by informing him of the creature's insolence to me furnished him with a cause for sending her away, which he had been contriving for some days. He has taken a lodging for her in the suburbs of the Po; and as he can visit her only in the evenings, the valet de chambre (whose name is Gerhard) has opportunity to see her any time of the day.

This, my dear mother, the count wanted to impart to me. He has desired that he may take his own measures, to unmask this jilt, and has undertaken to restore me my husband, more full of regard and tender sentiments for me than ever. He will not acquaint me with his plan of operations; however, I give a shrewd guess at it. But, I have a scruple, that gives me great uneasiness: This creature is four months gone with child; should not I be guilty of the infant's death, if she should miscarry thro' any harsh measures of mine? And, would it not be more advisable to be quiet, 'till she is brought to bed? Alas! What will become of her afterwards?

The count's valet only signs a passion, he has no real love for her. How miserable is a woman, when she suffers a violent inclination to get possession of her heart? This girl came of a family remarkable for probity, and she had a very religious education; but a love of finery, rendered all those advantages useless, and the count has discovered, that a violent passion for masquerades, was the first occasion of her being under disgrace with her relations. Practiced in the art of dissimulation, she had imposed on her mother, and those who recommended her to me; and I am fully convinced, that the marquis is delighted with this conquest, from a persuasion it is the effect of his merit alone.

I sincerely pity the woman who is under the dominion of a criminal passion. But I must confess, that I am sometimes tempted to laugh at the ridiculous credulity of the men. My husband wants neither experience nor good sense; and yet he suffers himself to be imposed on, by the affected innocence of a young wench, who deceives him, even before his own face,

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without once entertaining the least suspicion of it. I must own I am afraid he will be driven to commit some violent outrage upon the poor wretch ; and I pity her with all my heart : And if nothing was wanting to prevail on Gerhard to marry her, but to furnish her out a tolerable portion, I would, with the greatest readiness contribute to it.

I have the more hastily passed over my relation of this unhappy affair, that I may acquaint you with a more agreeable one, which gives me a great deal of pleasure.

About a fortnight ago the marquis introduced to me a Neapolitan lord, the handsomest man you ever saw. But we cease to pay any regard to his outward perfections, the moment he speaks ; and one cannot imagine that a man of his years, should be master of such universal knowledge, so solid a judgment, and so ready, true, and brilliant a wit. But, pray, do not suspect me of prejudice, for all the world has the same opinion of Signor Mastrilli ; and his assiduous attendance at our house, has raised much jealousy : He did not conceal from the marquis the motive of his visits. My sister has made a conquest of him : And he has protested to my husband, that he should think himself the happiest of mankind, if he could gain her affections, and consent to marry him. The marquis honestly told him, that my sister had no other portion but her beauty and virtue : And this confession, far from discouraging him, seem'd to give an additional warmth to his sentiments for her.

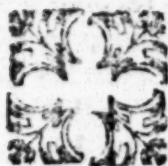
Herewith you will receive a letter from him, and another from the marquis, to ask my father's consent and yours. My sister can scarce contain the joy she feels, at this preference of the young stranger : However, she knows nothing of his design ; and, I think, vanity alone, has occasioned the emotions we have discovered in her ; in which, if her heart has any share, I am very much deceived. The marquis is of my opinion in this respect ; however we look upon the marriage as determined, provided it meets with your approbation. My sister is yet too young to feel the

effects of love; besides, her little heart has not room to entertain two passions at the same time. I think she is ambitious, and that inclination gratified, she would probably make due returns of affection to an amiable husband, to whom she would owe such great obligations.

Signor Mastrilli, like a delicate lover, would willingly have acquainted her with all the steps he has taken to obtain her; but the marquis has satisfied him in that respect, and swears, he *shall* be beloved, which has made him a little easy. I have a very sensible pleasure, in thinking, this dear girl, is about to be so advantageously settled; but, when I reflect on the inconstancy of man, I fear she must one day suffer the afflictions I now bear, and I pity her with all my heart.

Happy are they, who in a peaceful retirement preserve their minds from those dangerous sentiments, so commonly contracted in a life of pomp and grandeur! Infidelity is rarely to be met with in villages; here, one constant heart is almost a miracle, and conjugal fidelity is looked upon as an antiquated chimaera, disregarded by every one, who call themselves polite.

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A YOUNG LADY.

III



LETTER XXVIII.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS,
her daughter.

DOUBT not, my dear child, the count will certainly bring back to you, your husband's affections; to the count you are indebted for your dear partner's life, to him you will owe his return to virtue. This last stroke was wanting to finish the count's picture. Surely friendship cannot soar a higher pitch! Believe me, my dear, baseness can never find admittance to such a heart, and there can be no room to dread the passion of such a lover.

I much approve of the tenderness you shew to the wretched object of the marquis's love; stay 'till she is brought to bed, and then refer the whole affair to the count's prudent management; he may, by degrees, prevail on his valet de chambre to marry the creature; for such kind of people are not over-nice, and, a large portion, will make him wink at what passed previous to his contract.

Your father has wrote to the marquis, and Signor Massilli. He leaves the settling that affair intirely to your husband; and as we know his prudence and understanding, we are persuaded he cannot be deceived in the character of that young lord. I cannot return adequate thanks to the Almighty, for the blessings he is pleased to confer on our family; and I pray, withot ceasing, that he will inspire your sister with all the graces which are fit for her, in her new condition, conjuring him that the marriage may not be accomplished, if that state of grandeur will be fatal to the salvation of my dear child. She is still very young, and I am afraid the raising her to so high a fortune, may turn her giddy; but let us leave all to

effects of love; besides, her little heart has not room to entertain two passions at the same time. I think she is ambitious, and that inclination gratified, she would probably make due returns of affection to an amiable husband, to whom she would owe such great obligations.

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Your father has wrote to the marquis, and Signor Masinilli. He leaves the settling that affair intirely to your husband; and as we know his prudence and understanding, we are persuaded he cannot be deceived in the character of that young lord. I cannot return adequate thanks to the Almighty, for the blessings he is pleased to confer on our family; and I pray, without ceasing, that he will inspire your sister with all the graces which are fit for her, in her new condition, conjuring him that the marriage may not be accomplished, if that state of grandeur will be fatal to the salvation of my dear child. She is still very young, and I am afraid the raising her to so high a fortune, may turn her giddy; but let us leave all to

providence, and endeavour, by our obedience, to deserve its especial guidance.

You are in the right, my dear, to regret the simplicity of manners of those who are brought up in retirement: It must be a very uncommon virtue which can be preserved in the midst of a court, but God never fails those who are faithful to him. Besides, you know, that he rubs with wormwood the breasts of the whore of Babylon, and mixes with wholesome bitters the pleasures of life, to prevent the children of this world from fixing their minds on it.

How many good qualities soever you suppose Signor Mastrilli possessed of, he is but a man, and young; so that your sister, must not expect to fix him. I know the little gentlewoman is high-spirited, and will be more sensibly affected by her husband's infidelity, than you are; she must, however, be patient, nature will not produce a phenomenon for her.

Your third sister is resolved to be a nun: She is continually teasing your father to give his consent, that she may go into the nunnery, wherere she has been a boarder; and declares she is not the least jealous at the good fortune of her two elder sisters. We are greatly edified by her sentiments; but, I have declar'd to her, our resolution not to comply with her request, till she is twenty-five years old. The time fixed on is at a great distance, I must confess; but we cannot take too great precautions against the zeal of a young person. Until that time, I shall suffer her to live at home, in as recluse a manner as she could in a cloyster, and shall never put a force upon her inclinations, with regard to matrimony: I would only have her know herself, as well as the world she would quit, that she may avoid the repentance, which is, too frequently, the consequence of inconsiderate engagements.

I find by your husband's letter, that the young Mastrilli is under no necessity of living at Naples. I should be very glad if your husband could prevail on him to make some stay at Turin. Your sister's tender age makes me tremble, she will greatly need a guide
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at her first entrance into the world ; and I should be satisfied, if she might continue any time under your eye. If that is impossible, persuade your favourite to attend her ; the advice of that woman, whom she loves and esteems, will be of great use to her.

I have heard, that libertinism, and irreligion, are as rife at Naples, as at Turin ; and that thought imbibers all my joy, for my child's being so advantageously settled ; however, not my will, but thine, be done, O Lord. This must be the result, dear child. May he be the conductor, the guide of that family, whereof he is the father, which I have every day of my life recommended to his care, and which I would rather see in the lowest state of poverty, than in a course of sin and wickedness, with splendor.

Adieu, my dear, write to me every post, for I shall have no ease, 'till I see the marquis cured of his folly.





LETTER XXIX.

The MARCHIONESS DE ———, to Madame DE
MONTIER, her mother.

Dear Mother,

I Cannot express to you the perplexity and confusion we are now in. My husband, on receipt of my father's letter, communicated it to Signor Mistrilli, who thought himself the happiest man in the world. My sister seemed to shew a satisfaction in the addresses of her lover, who flattered himself he was beloved. You may judge how great must be his despair, when he was convinced he had no cause for that hope. The girl will not hear of marriage; she protests she cannot help trembling at the thought of an obligation of this kind, and threw herself at the marquis's feet, conjuring him, not to lay a restraint on her inclinations. We questioned her whether she had any dislike to the gentleman who was chosen for her husband; she assured us she had not; and that she was thoroughly sensible of his great merit; but that if authority was used to compel her, she should be the most miserable of all creatures. Before I informed her lover of this repulse, I took her in private, and spared nothing to discover the cause of it; but, dear mother, I am at the greatest loss; her little heart is impenetrable. She sheds floods of tears, and concludes with saying, she will be a nun. You know, madam, what great dislike she had for that condition, and I cannot conceive the reason that has so suddenly altered her mind.

We found ourselves at last obliged to come to an explanation with her lover. I was appointed to undertake that office, and I used all possible precautions to soften the disagreeable compliment I was about to make him. I imputed my sister's repugnance to her youth, her great affection to me, and the fear of being

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ing obliged to live in a country she did not like. But notwithstanding this alleviation, it gave poor Mastrilli a mortal blow.

Alas, dear mother, how unhappy is the man that gives up his heart to love, and how little knowledge had I of the violence of that passion, 'till now! As I continued my discourse, Mastrilli grew pale and trembled: His eyes were drowned in tears, and at last he fell at my feet, almost lifeless. I must have had a heart of stone, not to be moved at his condition; and I could have wished, some lucky chance, had brought my sister into my apartment: Surely, her heart would have melted at this sight. For my part, I was so affected, that I joined my tears to those of that luckless lover, and, heartily promised him that I would use my utmost endeavours to incline my sister to favour him; but so great was his generosity, that he conjured me to lay no restraint on her. He has intreated the marquis to favour him with his assistance, being in hopes to move her by his perseverance; and my husband, who cannot conceive what my sister's denial is owing to, has ordered her, a little harshly, to receive the addresses of Signor Mastrilli. She has obeyed, but it is easily seen, she puts a great force upon her inclinations. This young lord comes every day to impart to me his grief; and when I see him so unhappy, I cannot help being highly displeased with my sister. She alters visibly, and, my woman assures me, she weeps great part of the night.

How much soever my husband is taken up with comforting this unhappy lover, yet he does not forget his mistress: He has furnish'd her lodgings in a stately manner, and hired her two women servants. He can visit her only once a day, but he makes himself amends for it by writing to her: She exposes all his letters to Gerhard, and I had the curiosity to read one of them. You cannot conceive any thing more tender and affectionate, and I should be tempted to believe the creature has bewitched him. However, I begin to be inured to his inconstancy, and am no other-

otherwise affected by it, than as it is displeasing to God.

I am convinced, by the emotions I observed in young Mastrilli, that the marquis never loved me; he esteems me only, and looks on me as a friend, fit to manage his house, and bear him children. If I am not deceived, this is the utmost extent of his regard to me. I dare not own to you that there are moments, in which my self-love is mortified, that I could not give birth to as great a passion as that my sister has inspired, and to which she makes such ill returns: Perhaps it would have instructed me what love is, for I actually find in my heart, that I never felt any of those violent sentiments, those inquietudes, which Mastrilli has experienced. But, I think, it is a great happiness to me, for then I could not have survived the marquis's infidelity.

Every thing, surely, conspires to increase my concern for the young Neapolitan's misfortune: I thought myself under a necessity of doing all in my power to render his situation more supportable. His sole pleasure is, to talk of my sister, and make me the depository of his grief; I imagined I could not deny him that consolation, more especially as my husband desired it. But the count, who is not ignorant of the motive for that young gentleman's assiduity, seems to be jealous of it; he cannot help sighing when he sees us together; he is become pensive, and yesterday, when he gave me his hand, as I was going out, he could not help saying to me, that he envied Mastrilli's good fortune; that he was happier than he imagined, since he had been able to bring me to sensibility. I know those words will bear an advantageous interpretation, we are sensible to pity as well as to love; but if the count's words are equivocal, his looks are not so. I am extremely troubled that I am obliged to keep measures with him; and I almost hate him, spite of all he has done for me. To punish him for his boldness, I affect to speak greatly in Mastrilli's praise. That is to say, I made his panegyrick,

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gyrick, for one cannot name him, without admiration of his great accomplishments and virtues.

Dictate to me, I beseech you, the conduct I ought to observe to my sister; I think it would be very happy if she had accepted the offer: But would it not be a very cruel thing to compel her?

I am, &c.



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XX

LETTER XXX.

Madame DU MONTIER, to the MARCHIONESS, her daughter.

HAVE you reflected, dear child, on what you communicated to me in your last letter? And do you not discern the gulph, that is opening under your feet? I am not under the least fear of inspiring you with too great terror, for you are now, in the greatest peril you ever were in your whole life. You begin to be less sensibly affected, by your husband's indifference and infidelity; you do not scruple to own he has never touched your heart; you envy your sister her having given rise to so lively a passion; and you are exasperated with the count, who, rendered quick-sighted by his jealousy, has dived into your heart, and discovered sentiments, which, even you yourself are ignorant of. For heaven's sake, my dear, open your eyes, view the danger you are exposed to, and at all events, fly from the young Mastrilli. The greater his merit, the more you ought to fear him. I am no longer surprized at the warmth with which you praise him: Examine your heart, search the most retired corners of it, and you will certainly shudder at what passes there, without your knowledge. But, perhaps, I may be alarmed without reason, possibly, compassion alone may have occasioned the expressions which have so frighten'd me. Remove my fears, then, dear child, it is not that I suspect your virtue. You, I am sure, will never do any thing contrary to your duty: But it is possible your heart may be ensnared before you are aware; and I foresee in such case you must undergo a most terrible conflict, tho' in the end, I hope, you would be victorious.

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But if, unhappily, my conjectures, and those of the count should be verified, I intreat you, be not discouraged. We are not masters of our own *senti-ments*, but we always are of our *actions*, and for the latter, alone, we shall be accountable to God. Perhaps he has permitted this fault of your heart, to humble you, and make you duly sensible, what you would be, without his grace.

Into how great disorders do our passions hurry us, when they are not under the guidance of reason? Your husband is imposed upon by the most despicable of wretches; the count is prey'd upon by the rage of jealousy; Mastrilli is actuated by alternate fear, hope, and vexation; your sister is consumed by a secret passion; and, you yourself, are deceived by sentiments which steal into your heart, under the guise of pity. Such, my dear child, are the dismal effects of the passions.

I foresee that this will occasion you to make many reflections, and that you will be at the last a conqueror: You will humbly submit to the hand of the Almighty, who is pleased to shew us the corruption of our hearts, and how little we ought to trust in our own strength. Remember, moreover, that discouragement on such an occasion, is the effect of pride, which cannot bear the sight of our imperfections; and, besides, that God requires us only to resist our inclinations, which render us culpable, in no greater degree than they are voluntary. But, I must now say a word or two of your sister.

I know the great dislike she always shewed to a monastic life; and cannot comprehend the motive to her repugnance, for a match so much beyond her hopes. I must needs think she has entertained a violent affection, and cannot help being of my former opinion. The girl loves the count, and being strongly possessed with her first inclination, she enjoys the delicate pleasure of sacrificing her fortune to him. I know her little heart is capable of the most heroic efforts; but the reading romances has spoiled her, which your father too greatly contributed to. He says, they inspire
young

young ladies with a noble pride ; and, during the six months your sister boarded in the nunnery, he made her read over Cassandra, Cleopatra, and the rest of that romantic lumber. This is the fruit of such reading ; she would now go abreast with these heroines whose misfortunes she had so often deplored. Her vanity supports her, and hides from her the horror of the sacrifice she is meditating. You may readily suppose, that as I am of such an opinion, I shall in no wise consent to her being a nun ; but I could wish she might be permitted to pass some time in a convent : She may, there, forget the count, and you will be furnished with a decent pretext to rid yourselves of Mastrilli.

I would have you absolutely leave to the dear count, whom I love with all my heart, the care of unmasking your rival, and do not you entertain the least curiosity in that respect. The perusal of the letter you mention, served only to increase your displeasure with the marquis. He merits your pity, and not your indignation or indifference. If you reflected on his behaviour to you, you would not doubt, as you do, of his love.

You never, you say, raised in him, such violent emotions, as you observed in your sister's lover ; the reason is, that love shews itself differently, according to the age of the persons brought under its dominion ; and, besides, the marquis met with no obstacle in obtaining your consent. But, suppose he had never entertained for you any other than a tender friendship founded on esteem ; I should think your condition preferable to your sister's. A prudent woman, would not stake her happiness dependant on a husband's love. It is a sentiment subject to the greatest vicissitude. Dear child, adieu. I desire you will not be dejected ; and, I think, I cannot, too often, insist on it.

